Encounter

July 1974 35p

CAN THE DEVIL BE SAVED?
LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI / A MARXIST ANSWER

KENNETH MINOGUE DR FROMM'S CURE
GILLIAN TINDALL MIDDLE-CLASS VALUES
NADINE GORDIMER SHORT STORY
GÜNTER GRASS • GEORGE MIKES • MAURICE CRANSTON

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Nadine Gordimer

Golden Reclining Nudes of the Desert

MONTEGO BAY. Sahara. Kalahari. Namib.

There are beaches of black sand where he has been to.

Wherever he has come from, there are hours on the way home over Africa when there is nothing down there. Sometimes it's at night and all you are aware of is perhaps a wave or two of turbulence, a heave from the day's heat, even at thirty thousand feet. Sometimes it's a day flight, clear, and even at thirty thousand feet you can squint down from the window-seat at long intervals and see it there, soft lap after lap of sand, stones, stones in sand, the infinite wreckage not of a city or a civilisation but the home that is the earth itself. Sometimes there is a sandstorm down where you can't see, and even thirty thousand feet up the air is opaque. The plane is privately veiled, hidden in sand, buried in space. Nothing is disclosed.

Once this winter he had to take a tourist class booking because—such is the number of people like himself travelling about the world on expense account—first class was full. At least he had a vacant seat beside him, in the tourist cabin. But at Lisbon a Portuguese family came aboard and after sulky looks between the two daughters who both wanted to sit with mama, one of them had to take the seat. So that was the end of his intention to lift the dividing arm and spread himself for sleep. It was midnight. She was a subdued girl, not pretty, nor perfumed beside him when the cabin lights were lowered and conversations gave way to hen-house shufflings. She had not said good evening, just looked at him with cow-eyes, someone who never got her own way, resigned to any objections that might be made as she approached the seat. When the hostess offered rugs she opened her thin mouth in a soundless mew of thanks. He was aware that she twisted her body, several times, to look back where mama and sister were sitting some rows away but she couldn't have been able to see much. He could hear her swallow, and sigh, as if they were in bed together. He was not comfortable, although he had the advantage of the angle of window and seat to wedge the postage-stamp pillow against; of course she had settled her forearms along the armrests and he could not lean the other way without crowding her. She had the light soft rug drawn up to her chin and it touched against his left hand lying on his thigh. Touched and drew almost away, touched and drew almost away, as she breathed, he supposed. He pushed it off and as he did so the side of his hand brushing a hand—hers, now lying, apparently, loosely against her thigh parallel with his—made of the movement a gesture of rejection: to excuse himself he corrected the movement into an impersonally polite one of replacing slipping covering.

Who spoke first?

Was it at all sure that it was he? Here in the dark (only dim, if he opened his eyes; the centre panels of light were off and it was the tiny reading bulb, no bigger than the light in the tail of an insect, of someone a few seats back that gave shape to what was next to him) here in the dark a hand lies half-curled against a thigh. The thigh is crossed (he guesses) over another, or its inner side swells laid against a second identical to it.

And if another hand should move over the thigh, from the outer side, near the knee somewhere (her body takes up the narrative), up and inwards at the same time, it will meet the parallel lines of the two thighs where, like two soft bolsters or rolls of warm dough,

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they feel the pressure of their own volume against each other.—

They are covered with something—stockings, I suppose, I didn't see when she seated herself, I didn't bother to look.

—The hand may be cool or it may feel warm. The thighs may freeze against it, tendons flexed rigid, or maybe they will lie helpless, two stupid chunks of meat, two sentient creatures wanting to be stroked.—

The plane was a hospital ward where the patients had not entirely settled for the night yet, the attendant with her blonde chignon passed silently down the rows in surveillance and the exchange stopped until she had gone, the hand waiting quietly on the thigh. Then, despite the fact that there was still the occasional movement that showed others were still awake, and an old man strolled slowly by on his way to the lavatory, the hand took up the thread of communication as happens when interruption cannot really disturb the deep level of preoccupation at which it has been established. It was his left hand, which had been farthest away from him and closest to the other being, anyway, and he did not have to shift his position leaning against the angle of seat and window. Under the rug the hand found the edge of the very short skirt and there was a pause, quite delicate and patient, until the answer—she lifted her weight just enough to release the material so that he could glide his hand (yes, there were stockings) beneath it and push it up with his wrist as the hand rose.

An inquiry into what kind of flesh this was, to what milieu it belonged: as might have been expected, travelling well-chaperoned with a mother and sister, it was clothed in more than the usual garments for girls of the same age and more independent sophistication. A lining of some kind beneath the skirt, and beneath that, so surprising that they baffled him for a moment, at the top of the stockings those bumps of metal and rubber fasteners that lead by elastic straps somewhere up to the body. For years now women wore flimsy stockings and pants of a piece; there was something identifiably duenna'd about the suspenders and the belt they implied. His stranger's hand, man's hand, opened a forefinger and hooked it under the stocking-top and touched flesh.

IN THE COSY DARK of other presences, in the intimacy like the loneliness of the crowd, the feel of flesh is experienced anew, as the taste of water is recognised anew in the desert. The finger went against the grain of fine down—yes, the flesh admits that it belongs to the Latin races, often hairy—and reached the warmth of the two legs pressed together. The skin was tacky, almost damp. It clung to his fingers with a message of excitement and pleasure. He felt how she kept her head absolutely still and knew he was forbidden to look at her face. Tucked, sucked in between the neatly parallel thighs his finger stirred only very slightly, just a murmur. He did not know its exact position in relation to the knees and the limits of the body; much higher than half-way, he guessed, because of the fullness of the thighs. The finger was in no hurry to broach the question; the thighs must be anticipating that it was coming. Even if they had never answered it before (neither she nor the sister looked more than sixteen or seventeen) they knew it had come now, whatever time this was—an hour between the hour of Europe and the hour of Africa, not registered on any watch glowing on passengers' wrists in the quiet dark—and whatever place this was: passengers are not disturbed by flight information while they sleep. It could have been the last of Europe or was Africa, already, they were unaware of passing over. She need not be afraid of wanting what was happening because it was happening nowhere. The other three fingers fluently joined the forefinger between the thighs and then unexpectedly (it must have been, for her) lost coherence and freeing themselves all the fingers trailed back and forth over the mound of one thigh, under the stocking but without unfastening the suspender, because the hand liked its confinement beneath a web. Then the fingers curled—she must have felt the tips if not the nails drawing in—and found, of course, another ridge of material that gave easily, in fact care had to be taken not to let it snap back against the skin—a crinkly edging round the leg of panties of some tight stretchy weave. If she had been sitting more upright, this was where the crease of juncture of thigh and body would have been. But she was lying as fully stretched under her rug as the seat on its reclining ratchet would allow, and his

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fingers recognised the juncture only by the different texture of the skin, a sudden grainless smoothness, silky and hot.

This time the question was differently phrased, that's all, but it must have been understood all the same: there was no rejoinder of change of position. The thighs, he could feel where the heel of his palm rested a moment on them, continued to clasp excitedly against nothing. His finger, just the one forefinger again (an appreciative monologue) roamed amid the curly hair in no hurry, delicately burrowed beneath this soft second rug as it was already concealed by the first and—suddenly—found itself tongued by a grateful dog. That was exactly what it felt like—delightful, fluttering, as innocent as the licking of a puppy; although it was he who was stroking movement along this wet and silky lining of her body, he had the impression it was his finger that was being caressed, not the finger that was doing the caressing. Now and then, quite naturally, he encountered the soundless O of the little mouth that made no refusal. As the night wore on—oh God knows how long it went on—the finger was able to enter, many times. At first he himself was magnificently tense, not only his sex but his whole body and legs, arms, neck, huge in the seat, swollen into unusual awareness of the bounds of himself, but later there were even moments when he must have been so fatigued he dozed, his finger inside her. He woke with amazement: in the tunnel of seat-backs, the dim curving walls, the very faint creaking that was all there was to indicate that the sensation of motionlessness was in fact the nest of extreme speed —just as the extreme intimacy, his hand, finger still inside the body beside him, was the extreme of detachment.

THE GRADUAL COMING into the light of a morning somewhere did not bring an end. He could not leave her and she could not let him go. The only thing he could not get her to do was touch him; her rather plump and quite womanly hand went limp and stiff-wristed when he tried to carry it over to himself; she would not. Soon it was light, anyway, the lights went up brutally on the sleepers as prisoners are forced awake, and he took his weary hand back in good time before the trays of synthetic fruit juice arrived. The hand smelled of the body it had just left. The girl waited for him to take a plastic cup of juice and then took hers, with the same soundless thank you to the hostess. They did not speak; she emptied the cup thirstily (yes, my girl, lust dries the mouth), put the soft rug aside and went up the aisle. When she returned, she had to stand a moment before taking her seat because someone was blocking the aisle, and he looked up and met her gaze, her pale, thick-skinned face with heavy eyebrows arched, hopeless, acceptingly. A stranger's face as the face of a woman with whom one has lived so long one doesn't see it any more, becomes once again closed, a stranger's.

She carefully put back the rug over herself.

He had pushed up the eyelid of blind in his oval porthole. The reluctantly-awakened plane drifted to half-sleep again. Orange searchlights of rising sun pierced from window across to window in the prostrate humming silence. It all began again, uncanny in the daylight. Down there below reddish eddyings of the upper air and the glint of wing flashing monotonously at him, sand was an infinite progression of petrified sound-waves. It flowed on and on, echoing itself since there was no organic renewal by which life could be measured. On and on, shimmering, fading, paling, deepening nothing. His gaze was carried on it while he continued to stroke, fondle, dabble, on and on, all the way, caressing her all the way. At Johannesburg, when he handed down a pink coat and a package of something that looked like a plant laced up in plastic, he spoke: —You are on holiday?— She answered that she and her mother and sister were coming to live with her uncle. Her English was strongly accented but quite intelligible. He said—Oh you'll like it there, in Durban. At the sea.— Her mother, moving with the other daughter along the queue in the aisle, nodded a faint and humble acknowledgement of the help he had given with hand-luggage.

He had washed his hands; used his electric razor; her hair was combed. The same clerk always came along with the driver to fetch him from the airport; he saw waiting at the barrier the respectfully alert, cocky young face, the sideburns and striped shirt advertised as correct wear for budding executives.

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An immigration official recognised him and waved him through ahead of the other sheep. The plant was being taken out of its wrapping at customs—of course, you can't bring in live plants from other countries. There was the usual making of conversation with the clerk in the car. —Good trip, this time, sir? Everything all right?—

—My knees need a week to straighten out, that's all. I had to travel tourist. Cramped as all hell.—

Her fluid on his hand as one says a man has blood on his hands. She screamed, or got up and told her mother. What an insane risk. A prosecution for "interfering" with a young girl; yes, *crimen injuria*. That was the name; the girl had no name. A TAP mohair rug. Who would have thought it. Not without tenderness, but who is ever to know that is part of the scandal—perhaps even of rape and murder?—sometimes the only tenderness possible. A man in his position would never be free of tittering disgrace. Never. Silence in the boardroom, change of conversation at the dinner table, when his name came up, and the young daughter of the house not told the reason, because she had known him as a family friend since she was a child along with his son. An insane risk. Nothing will ever be disclosed. It was so easy, and God knows who the stranger was and where, in these streets or those, this town or that, she may anytime be quite near, with the mother and sister and whole clan those people have, guarding young girls.

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December Morning

I raise the blind and sit by the window
dry-mouthed, waiting for light.
One needs a modest goal,
something safely attainable.
An hour before sunrise
(due at seven fifty-three)
I go out into the cold new morning
for a proper view of that performance;
walk greedily towards the heath
gulping the blanched air
and come in good time to Kenwood.
They have just opened the gates.
There is a kind of world here, too:
on the grassy slopes above the lake
in the white early Sunday
I see with something like affection
people I do not know
walking their unlovable dogs.

Fleur Adcock

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Leszek Kolakowski

Can the Devil be Saved?

MY PURPOSE in taking up this theme, which I have borrowed from Giovanni Papini's book on the devil, is to use it as the symbol of a fundamental question, one that has recurred throughout the religious and philosophical history of our culture. Can the cosmic and historical drama be interpreted as a movement towards the ultimate reconciliation of all things? Will the evils of the human condition, our sufferings and our failures, reveal their redemptive meaning when seen from the vantage point of ultimate salvation?

Posing the question in such a general form immediately reveals that it is neither a specifically Christian nor even a specifically religious problem but is useful in distinguishing different trends both in Christianity and in secular theories of salvation (including Marxism). The question is more formidable than the traditional theodicies would have it. We ask not only whether evil, envisaged in the broadest soteriological perspective, will turn out to form part of the necessarily good Providential blueprint, *i.e.* have an instrumental role as a portion of the raw material of the divine construction of history; but we must also ask whether it will prove not to be evil at all, whether at the end nothing will be omitted from universal salvation, nothing rejected, nothing extraneous.

CERTAINLY, EARLY CHRISTIAN TEACHING was articulated partially in the struggle against Manichaism and its derivative Christological heresies such as monophysitism, though the struggle against the Pelagian heresy was probably far more important in shaping the doctrinal corpus of Christianity. What Christianity attacked in the Manichean theology was the eternal unavoidable dilemma put forward by the Epicureans: since evil exists in the world, then God himself must be evil, or impotent—or both. The basic question here was, of course, the limitation of divine omnipotence, a consequence which seemed inescapable once evil was admitted as a positive reality. The Augustinian theory of the privative character of evil had to cope with this difficulty and come up with a salutary formula which would retain untouched the essential goodness of being, the idea of God as the unique Creator. In denying its ontological foundation, this formula did not, of course, affect the reality of evil, the fact that there is a diabolical will directed towards it. St Augustine stressed most emphatically that each act that emanates from human will alone is turned against God and is by definition evil and diabolic. Certain consequences of this theory of evil *privatio* are difficult to understand, and in particular the idea that even Satan must be good, in so far as he *exists*, and if one takes being and goodness to be coextensive. Thus, the conventional Christian philosophy of evil avoids the dangers of limiting (and thereby abolishing) divine omnipotence. Certain Christian writers stretch this interpretation so far that they seem to imply that although human will naturally tends towards the good, because of ignorance people perceive good where it does not in fact exist—which would seem to run counter to both the idea of original sin and the principle which states that grace is a necessary condition of good will.

The rejection of Pelagianism seems to me to have been crucial in moulding Christian teaching. Perhaps I should speak not of Pelagianism in the strict historical sense but rather of a larger tendency which reinforces, implies, renders plausible, or furnishes arguments for the claim that *evil is in principle eradicable*—that evil is contingent, and not inherent in the nature of the world.

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IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT, the damnation of the devil and the concept of original sin are the most precise forms in which the contingent character of evil is denied. I believe that this denial is of the utmost importance to our culture but that one can also discern in the Christian world a strong temptation to abandon this position and yield to that optimistic Enlightenment tradition which believed in the final reconciliation of all things in ultimate universal harmony. Whether it is expressed in Teilhard de Chardin's pantheist teachings or in Bishop John Robinson's denial of a difference between the sacred and the profane, whether based on certain of Paul Tillich's ideas or on an attempt to assimilate Feuerbach's anthropology to Christianity, this belief in universal reconciliation is not only contrary to the Christian tradition but runs counter to what we gather from the scientists to be the enduring patterns of human life. Eventually it endangers important values in our culture. I do not, however, deny the justness of much of the criticism of the Church for its harmful and reactionary use of the doctrine of original sin.

The two complementary ideas at the very core of Christian culture—that humanity was basically saved by Christ's coming, and that since the exile from paradise every human being is basically condemned if we consider his natural status alone and set grace aside—should be considered jointly solely in order to counteract the jaunty optimism or the despair that could result if they were dealt with separately.

Certainly the Church has specifically declared that many people had been saved and has never specifically declared that any one was condemned. There is nothing in the Church's teaching that clearly excludes the possibility that hell is empty, but there is nothing to permit the assumption that hell does not exist. The devil's presence confirms unambiguously that evil is an everlasting part of the world which can never be completely eradicated, and that universal reconciliation cannot be hoped for. One of the basic principles of the Catholic Church is that Christ died for everyone, not merely for the elect, but that man is free only to accept grace or to reject it, without thereby positively reinforcing its energy (denial of irresistible grace), was a basic idea of the Council of Trent and seems to follow naturally from the doctrine of original sin.

The belief in the eventual synthesis of all values and energies in the universe, which will prove to be differentiated outflowings or ramifications of the same divine root of being, reappears in the "Neoplatonic peripheries" of Christian history. It can be found in Scotus Eriugena's *De Divisione Naturae* and in Teilhard's *Phénomène humain*, and a Christian must view Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* as a bastard offspring of the same theodicy. The implication of this belief is that cosmic history leaves no rubbish behind; everything is finally digested, everything incorporated, in the triumphal progress of the spirit. In the ultimate balance all is justified, each element and event, struggle and contradiction will appear as individual contributions to the same work of salvation.

This belief in a universal synthesis to be consummated in the Omega point is rooted in the very concept of a unique Creator. Once we know that essence, existence, and love perfectly converge in the primordial divine being, how can we escape the conclusion that whatever occurs in the world is ultimately reducible to that same unique source of energy and conveys the same message of original love? How could this energy be diverted from its natural channel and turned against God Himself? How could any damage be irreparable, any corruption eternal? In fact, how can one believe in the devil? The traditional answer was that evil is pure negativity, *carentia*, absence of good, that it is simply a hole in the compact mass of Being. But this is hardly satisfactory, since a negative energy is still needed to drill this hole. Where does this energy come from? The only answer suggested by the idea of the unique Creator is that this energy must spring from the same source, that an eye which spies on the world from the viewpoint of totality can discover the all-encompassing divine love even in apparent monstrosities, will perceive charity in cruelty, harmony in struggle, hope in despair, order in corruption, ascent in descent.

BUT ANOTHER DANGER awaits those who hoped to discover a salutary quibble in their denial of the reality of evil (and not only of its ontological autonomy). They have to reveal a meaning in this self-abolishing movement of evil, and this meaning must obviously be related to God Himself, since only in God may a reason be found for the creation of the world and all its miseries.

This leads them easily to the suggestion—typical of all Neoplatonic theodicies—that God brought the Universe into being in order that

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He might grow in its body, that He needs His alienated creatures to complete His perfection. The growth of the universe, and in particular the development of the human spirit which leads all things towards perfection, involves God Himself in the historical process. Consequently God Himself becomes historical. At the culmination of cosmic evolution He is not what He was "in the beginning." He creates the world and in re-absorbing it enriches Himself. And so long as the odyssey of the spirit is not consummated, God cannot be considered a self-sufficient and timeless perfection. What was supposed to be a theodicy is transformed into a theogony, a history of the growing God. This is what happened to Eriugena and Teilhard, for in attempting to avoid the trap of modifying God's omnipotence, they modify His perfection, His timelessness, His self-sufficiency.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, I am in no position to clarify these difficulties or to propose any new solution to questions which have tormented the most eminent philosophical and religious thinkers for centuries. I am merely trying to say that there is a cultural danger inherent in any utopia of perfect reconciliation and—what is another facet of the same problem—that the concept of original sin gives us a penetrating insight into human destiny.

It is hardly surprising that the optimistic philosophy of universal reconciliation should tempt contemporary Christianity so strongly. After the many failures it suffered through its inability to cope with a secular civilisation and its mistrust of intellectual and social changes beyond its control, after its spurious success in overcoming the Modernist crisis at the beginning of this century, a Great Fear seems to have pervaded the Christian world—the fear of being trapped in an alien enclave within a basically un-Christian society. This Great Fear of being out-distanced and isolated now impels Christian thinking towards the idea that the most important task of Christianity is not only to be "within the world", not only to participate in the efforts of secular culture, not only to modify the language of its teachings so that they are intelligible to all men, but to sanctify in advance almost any movement which arises spontaneously from the "natural" impulses of man. Universal suspicion seems to have been supplanted by universal approval, the dread of a forced retreat to the Christian culture of the Syllabus seems to inspire a push forward to the Christian culture of Münster, and the threat of being scratched from the competition appears to be stronger than that of losing one's identity. Not surprisingly, this fear finds expression in the shifts of Christian teaching, from which the concepts of the devil and of original sin seem almost to have vanished. Belief in the unlimited natural perfectibility of man, in the *Parousia* which man himself will prepare, is gradually prevailing in the minds of Christians.

A NON-CHRISTIAN is not only entitled to speculate anxiously about the form of Christianity and about its fate, but should think about them, for obvious reasons. Christianity is part of our common spiritual heritage, and to be entirely non-Christian would mean exclusion from this culture. Clearly Christianity is an important factor in moral education; spiritual changes in Christianity correspond to changes which occur outside it, and both must be interpreted together. The world needs Christianity, not only in the subjective sense but also because it is probable that certain important tasks cannot be undertaken without it, and Christianity must assume its responsibility

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for the world which for centuries it has helped to shape.

No one can deny that the idea of original sin, and of an incurable corruption of human nature, may be (and was) used as an effective ideological instrument of conservative resistance to social change and against attempts to undermine existing systems of privilege. It is tempting to vindicate any kind of injustice simply by saying: "Our destiny is to suffer; our sins are great; no essential improvement of the human condition can be expected on earth. . . ." In both the 19th and the 20th century, many more or less official pronouncements and much of the Catholic literature on social problems run true to the typical patterns of conservative Catholic mentality, and completely justify even the crude, traditional criticisms by socialist writers.

It would, however, be too easy to shrug off this question simply by saying that the notion of original sin does not entail this type of conclusion, that it was "abused" for an improper purpose, or "misinterpreted." The connection between an awareness of original sin and an attitude of passive resignation in the face of human misery cannot be reduced to a trivial error in logic; it is both stronger and more important. To say that we are infected with original corruption and that the devil cannot be converted does in fact mean that there is a great deal of evil which cannot be eradicated, and that there is something incurable in our misery. It does not mean that all kinds of evil are eternal, all forms of misery unavoidable. But in our human condition we have no means of discovering beyond doubt what does and what does not depend on us; we are unable to draw the line between the temporary and the lasting aspects of our spiritual and physical poverty. We do not even know how to define these aspects. Many specific misfortunes are reversible and many burdens can be alleviated, but we can never know in advance what price we must pay for our achievements, since the values we gain are paid for in a coin that is non-convertible. Each fragment of what we call progress has to be paid for, and we can make no comparisons between the expenditure and the rewards. Our inability to balance the books is itself part of our incurable disablement. Since an increase in our satisfactions is always accompanied by a multiplication of our needs, we cannot know whether the gap between what we subjectively need and what we are capable of satisfying is decreasing or, if it is, how to measure that decrease. We feel it our duty to struggle against all sources of affliction, but we do so without hope of ever attaining the certitude that there is fruit on the tree of progress.

The possible disastrous effects of the concept of original sin on our psychological condition and our cultural life are undeniable; and so are the disastrous effects of the opposing doctrine with its implication that our perfectibility is limitless, and that our predictions of ultimate synthesis or total reconciliation can be realised. However, the fact that both affirmation and rejection of the concept of original sin have emerged as powerful destructive forces in our history is one of many which testify in favour of the reality of original sin. In other words, we face a peculiar situation in which the disastrous consequences of assenting to either of two incompatible theories confirm one of them and testify against its rival.

THIS RIVAL THEORY—the denial of the ontological meaning of evil, or at least the denial of our inherent inability to dispose of evil completely—is disastrous for other reasons. If everything is ultimately to be justified, everything to receive a meaning in the definitive salvation, then not only will past history be judged innocent, but contemporary history as well—and contemporary history is precisely what we are doing here and now. Thus we will necessarily be acquitted when the last judgment is delivered, either because our motives were good or because we were merely unconscious agents of the wisdom of Providence. Hope for the full eradication of evil in the future carries with it the testimony of present innocence. Let us rejoice! after Armageddon even the vanquished army will arise from death to glory.

THE PROSPECT OF THAT FINAL UNITY, which—thanks to human efforts—will benignly absorb and enoble the painful march of past history, is present both in the Christian world and in the history of socialist movements. The words "thanks to human efforts" should be emphasised. Even the hope of an individual paradise, attainable on earth—as with the mystics—can be disastrous if it is based on the idea that the mystical *annihilatio* can occur as a result of, or as a reward for, the individual's contemplative training. Indifference to others' needs and sufferings and neglect of one's own moral standards easily follow such hopes (one

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may see this in the Quietists), since a single undifferentiated act of faith is supposed to absorb (and thereby abolish) all partial and more modest merits. But even in those mystics who awaited the union of love with God as a gratuitous gift of grace, the frontier between exclusive absorption with God and indifference to others is dangerously blurred, rather like the frontier between contempt for the flesh and idolatry of the physical world as an emanation from the Creator. The dangers are still more patent if we nourish the hope for a collective paradise, as in the Chiliastic movements. This explosive hope is strongly rooted in the tradition of socialist thought. We find it in Marx (rather less in Engels) in the shape of a belief that the communist future will encompass the perfect reconciliation of man's empirical existence with his genuine essence and with Great Nature as well. This return of man to himself—the complete reappropriation of all human forces and faculties—is exactly what the paradisiac state is supposed to be; the perfect unity of human beings on both an individual and a social scale. The spectacle of man perfectly united with himself and with his social and natural environment is as incomprehensible as the concept of heaven. The inconsistency is basically the same: an earthly paradise must combine satisfaction with creativity, a heavenly paradise must combine satisfaction with love. Both combinations are inconceivable, since without dissatisfaction—without some form of suffering—there can be no creativity, no love. Complete satisfaction is death; partial dissatisfaction entails pain.

This seems a most trivial platitude, but somehow in the promise of paradise and the perfect unity of man it goes unnoticed. The inconsistency is perhaps most flagrant in the case of earthly paradise since the confrontation of empirical realities brings it within our reach, whereas no one claims to know the laws by which heaven is ruled. That the very idea of the unity of man is inconceivable again bears witness to the reality of original sin.

And there is further testimony, so extensive and so powerful that it seems unpardonable to ignore it. Our corruptibility is not contingent. We pretend to know this but rarely examine the relevance of this knowledge to our hopes. We pretend to know that nothing is evergreen, that each source of life is eventually exhausted and each concentration of energy eventually dispersed. We pretend to know that the biological process of life itself is the source of anxiety, conflict, aggression, uncertainty, concern. We pretend to know that no consistent system of values is possible and that at every step values that we consider important become mutually exclusive when we attempt to apply them practically to individual cases; tragedy, the *moral* victory of evil, is always possible. We pretend to know that reason often hampers our ability to liberate our energies, that moments of joy are more often than not wrested from intellectual lucidity. We pretend to know that creation is a struggle of man against himself and, more often than not, against others also, that the bliss of love lies in hopeful dissatisfaction, that in our world death is the only total unity. We pretend to know why our noble motives slide into evil results, why our will towards good emerges from pride, hatred, vanity, envy, personal ambition. We pretend to know that most of our life consists in taking flight from reality, and concealing this reality from ourselves. We pretend to know that our efforts to improve the world are constrained by the narrow limits defined by our biological structure and by the pressures of the past which has moulded us and which we cannot leave very far behind. All these things, which we pretend to be aware of, compose the reality of original sin—and yet it is this reality that we attempt to deny.

CERTAINLY, OUR DENIAL is not without grounds, and arguments can be put forward to justify it. One can argue that sometimes the truth can poison, and a lie may well be a blessing. One can argue that the truth about original sin entails the conclusion that this truth must not be revealed, since we may be so utterly discouraged by the awareness of the narrow limits within which our efforts are successful that paralysis prevents us from achieving even the modest successes of which we are capable. One can argue that only an infinite hope can set in motion the energy needed to achieve finite results, that although we can never get rid of suffering, we can alleviate or limit it, and in order to do so efficiently we must accept the erroneous belief that eventually suffering will be totally abolished. In short, it is arguable that if we can do what we can, this is only because we believe that we can do something we cannot.

There is a good deal of truth in such arguments. It seems probable that we could not endure life if we knew from the beginning all

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that we have learned from decades of experience. An ingenious device exists in our inability to convince young people of the deceptiveness of their great hopes; if these hopes do result in anything of value, it can only be because they were deceptive. Probably little improvement would have been achieved in human life had people known in advance the price they would have to pay. Perhaps the most usual form in which one perceives the concept of original sin is the conviction that every individual is eventually defeated in his struggle with life, that we have lost before we begin the battle. In most cases, to hold this conviction would deprive us of the will to fight—there is good reason why we prefer to reject the ontological meaning of evil.

But there is also good reason for stating that we ought to face up to its reality, and not only because we admit the primacy of truth over efficiency, since this primacy cannot rationally be demonstrated. The promise of total salvation, the hope of a beneficent Apocalypse which will restore to man his innocence, flies in the face of reason and our right to remain individuals. The connection is obvious.

Our imperfection is revealed by—among other things—our ability to doubt, but this very ability maintains the precarious equilibrium of our social and individual life. Doubt has played an essential role in our attainment of the status of rational beings; we must protect our ability and our right to doubt in order to preserve our intellectual and moral balance. The fact of our imperfection is not alone a sufficient basis to enable us to doubt; we need an awareness of that imperfection. Doubt may be considered one of the consequences of original sin, but it also protects us against its more deleterious effects. It is important for us to be uncertain about the deep motives for our own deeds and the grounds of our convictions, since this is the only device which gives us protection against an all-justifying fanaticism and intolerance. We should remember that the perfect unity of man is impossible, otherwise we would try to impose this unity by any means available, and our foolish visions of perfection would evaporate in violence and end in a theocratic or totalitarian caricature of unity which claimed to make the "Great Impossible" an actuality. The greater our hopes for humanity the more we are ready to sacrifice, and this too seems very rational. As Anatole France once remarked, never have so many been murdered in the name of a doctrine as in the name of the principle that human beings are naturally good.

Nobody wants to doubt, but to destroy doubt is to subvert reason. According to the ancient Persian mythology which was the main source of the Manichean philosophy, the God of Evil and the God of Goodness were twin brothers; both were born, and not just one, because a doubt had slipped into the mind of the primordial God. Consequently doubt is the original source of evil, and not its result—not surprisingly, since to the divine mind doubt is destruction. To our minds, doubt bears witness to our imperfection rather than producing it, but at the same time prevents the evil in us from realising its full potentialities. That which makes us painfully imperfect helps us to be less imperfect than we might have been, and this again attests to the reality of original sin.

HAVING ABANDONED THE MYTH of Prometheus, perhaps we need not portray our condition in terms of the static myth of Sisyphus, despite Albert Camus' pessimism. The biblical legend of Nebuchadnezzar, who was degraded to the condition of a beast when he tried to exalt himself to the dignity of God, would perhaps serve us better.

We know all too well that there is no achievement of mind, no act of human genius, that cannot be turned against man or in some way be used as an instrument of the devil. Our inventiveness will never be sufficiently powerful to outwit the devil and prevent him from turning our noblest creations against us. Doubt is one of the natural resources we can employ against him, since doubt may weaken our Promethean self-confidence and mediate between the incompatible demands that life imposes on us. Needless to say, the devil can also harness doubt to his service, and make it the pretext for inaction and immobility when we need resolution and a readiness to dare the uncertainties of struggle. Our natural forces can find no safe shelter against evil; all we can do is practise the art of balancing opposing dangers. And this is precisely what the Christian tradition affirms in its statement that certain results of original sin are inescapable, and that if salvation is possible it can only be through grace.

There are reasons why we need Christianity, but not just any kind of Christianity. We do not need a Christianity that makes political revolu-

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tion, that rushes to cooperate with so-called sexual liberation, that approves our concupiscence or praises our violence. There are enough forces in the world to do all these things without the aid of Christianity. Men need a Christianity that will help them to move beyond the immediate pressures of life, that gives them insight into the basic limits of the human condition and the capacity to accept them, a Christianity that teaches them the simple truth that there is not only a tomorrow but a day-after-tomorrow as well, and that the difference between success and failure is rarely distinguishable. We need a Christianity which is not gold or purple or red, but grey.

YET WE NEED MORE than Christianity, not for the sake of an abstract pleasure in variety but because the truth of Christianity is as one-sided as any other truth. We need the living tradition of socialist thought which appeals to human forces solely by promoting the traditional values of social justice and freedom. And here again we need not just any kind of socialist idea. We do not need foolish fantasies about society from which any temptation to evil has been removed; or about a total revolution which will secure for us at one stroke the blessings of ultimate salvation and a world without strife. We need a socialism that will help us to understand the complexity of the brutal forces acting in human history and reinforces our readiness to fight against social oppression and human misery. We need a socialist tradition that is aware of its own limitations, since the dream of ultimate salvation is despair disguised as hope, the will to power disguised as a craving for justice.

We cannot, however, expect a grand synthesis of the different and incompatible traditions which we need. We may attempt to reconcile in an abstract generality the values that we really need, but in the majority of actual cases we will find them in opposition to each other. The Eden of human universality is a paradise lost.

Masada

Your image does not change
when you depart from the city:
your image follows you
to the desert, to Eyn Yahav, to Neoth Kikhar.
Landscapes solid in their stillness
are confirmed in locks of a girl
undecayed at Masada

Here in the salty subsoil of Chronicles
coupling ancient days with the time of my
carnolithic poems—heavy waters build up
and the light of seven days
ripples towards you like a field of potash
among moon surf

David Rokeah

translated from the Hebrew by Joel Neuberg

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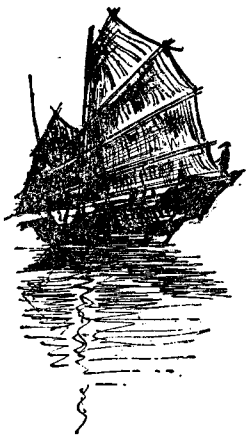
Jan Morris

Hong Kong



A FOREIGN DEVIL of my acquaintance, on my first morning in Hong Kong, took me to the top of an exceeding high mountain, by funicular from Garden Road, and invited me to worship.

The kingdoms of the world lay before us. The sky-scrapers of Victoria, jam-packed at the foot of the hill, seemed to vibrate with pride, greed, energy and success, and all among them the traffic swirled, and the crowds milled, and the shops glittered, and the money rang. Beyond lay the ships in their hundreds, like a vast fleet anchored in the roadsteads from Chai Wan to Stonecutter's Island, here a super-tanker, here a cruise ship, there a warship all a'bristle, with their attendant sampans busy beside them, and the junks and tugs and pilot boats hurrying everywhere, and the hydrofoil foaming off to Macao, and the ceaseless passage of the Star ferries backwards and forwards through the harbour. Across the water stood Kowloon on the mainland: deep among its structures ran the great gash of Nathan Road, violent with advertising, and off to the east the airport runway protruded brutally into the harbour, and sometimes threw a jet screaming and smoking into the sky.

Beyond it all again lay the hills of China, but these my guide ignored. His eyes were focused intensely upon that brilliant pulsation at our feet, ship to bank building, harbour-front to hotel. He was like the proudest of land-owners surveying his inherited estate. "You may not like it", he said. "We don't ask you to like it. We don't *expect* you to like it. But you must admit it *works*."

HE MEANT THAT IT WORKED in a Victorian, ideological sense, like a steam-pump as an agency of Progress, or some unarguable theory of the Manchester School. It is certainly true that Hong Kong has a greased, thumping feel to it, suggestive of well-turned brass pistons. In the reference books, or on the map, it may seem a weird political and economic anomaly: on the spot it feels, if not exactly natural, at least habitual. It has been there a long time. There is a mystic saying in Hong Kong that one must not express an opinion about the place until one has known it for 19 years: but the corporate experience of the colony has now lasted for four or five generations, since that fateful 26th of January 1841 when the Royal Navy raised the flag on the foreshore at Possession Point—just along the road, that is, from the Macao hydrofoil station. There could be neither safety nor honour for either the British or the Chinese, Captain Charles Elliot, *R.N.*, had declared, "until Her Majesty's flag flies on these coasts in a secure position"; and since then no British Government, and perhaps no Chinese either, has seriously considered lowering the Union Jack again, and returning Hong Kong to its hinterland.

It may look precarious in *The Statesman's Year Book,* but it is an Oriental fact of life. Poised minutely, all 400 square miles of it, upon the skin of China, it is a sort of permanent parasite. It is divided into two constitutional parts. Hong Kong Island, with the mainland peninsula of Kowloon, is British by right of possession, ceded in perpetuity by the Chinese. The New Territories, 365 square miles of the adjacent mainland, are British by virtue of a 99-year lease, expiring in 1997. But though to outsiders there sounds a crucial difference between these two categories,

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the one organically British, the other British by licence, so to speak, when you are there they both seem much the same. The present Chinese Government, as it happens, does not recognise the New Territories lease anyway, so that the date of its expiry is more than usually hypothetical even by diplomatic standards; and though to gentlemen abed in England there may seem something risky to an investment that theoretically collapses in 25 years, capitalists in Hong Kong seldom seem to give the matter a thought, and behave as though the whole place will be true-blue British for ever.

And if the parasite is well-established, it is also full of the life force—bile, venom, adrenalin, according to your diagnosis. More than four million people live in Hong Kong. Its port handles 7,000 ocean-going ships a year. It is an indefatigable producer of textiles, toys, plastics, electronics, and one of the most brilliant and bullish of the world's entrepôts. If you consider it as part of the almost vanished British Empire, then it is more populous than all the rest of the Empire put together. If you think of it as part of China, it is the third biggest Chinese city, and easily the richest. On the one hand it is a dazzling showcase of Western capitalism, on the other a microcosm of China herself, within whose cramped and isolated confines there live emigrants from every Chinese province, class, and philosophy.

It ticks and wriggles there, on the edge of Kwangtung Province—sometimes an irritant to the People's Republic, perhaps, but a stimulation too, and perhaps even a comfort. Whatever else I felt about Hong Kong, when my friend on the Peak invited me to admire it, at least I did not think it in the least temporary. It is always rash to prophecy political longevity (as Voltaire realised when, waking up in Paradise one day in 1798, he remembered his forecast that the Venetian Republic would last for ever). But this I will take the risk of saying, that like many another abnormality, Hong Kong may well outlive the norm. It reminds me of those quirks of English society, wrinkled customs, immemorial exceptions, which linger on through change and election all the more tenaciously because they stand outside the rules.

"What an anachronism!" people exclaim. "A British colonial Government, totally unrepresentative, like something out of Victoria's day, lording it over four million Chinese! How do the Chinese stand for it?" They stand for it, I think, largely because they *are* Chinese. They know a useful compromise when they see one, and so well does the device of Hong Kong suit their needs and genius that for all I know they invented the arrangement themselves, like everything else, 10,000 years ago in Soochow.

THE RAW CHINESENESS of Hong Kong, unlike the tempered Chineseness of Singapore, is so terrific, and so complex in texture that I have always despaired of capturing its sensations in words, and on my first visit to the colony, in 1958, I was reduced to a symbolic description of the clumps of edible frogs, tied together around the waist and still indignantly alive, which are the piquant prodigies of the Central Market. I cannot do much better now. The noise, the push, the sheer physical mass of the Chinese in Hong Kong overwhelm the senses, and reduce the most grandiloquent writer to vignette.

Take, for a start, one's arrival at one of the second-class hotels with grand names which cluster, gaudy with neon lights, around the waterfront end of Nathan Road. This is a dauntingly Chinese experience. The doorman indeed is probably a turbanned Sikh, offering old imperialists a poignant reminder of better times, but inside the lobby everything is garishly Chinese. Tasteless, loud, and faintly suggestive of humdrum varieties of sin, it is nevertheless exceedingly efficient. The receptionist throws you a steely gold-toothed smile, but has your reservation at her finger-tips. The porter's greeting is perfunctory, but you can be sure he has the right key. The room itself is clean, and has plenty of towels, and lots of hot water, and a list of Girlie Clubs prepared for your convenience by the Tourist Association.

But ah, when the porter closes your door behind you, and you are left alone in that cubby-hole of Hong Kong, how more than impersonal, how dehumanised the place turns out to be! You look out through the metal-framed windows, and across the great filthy pit of the hotel, littered with old sacks and piles of discarded masonry, a hugh slab of building confronts you. All its windows are brilliantly lit, and in each a little Chinese cameo, insulated from all its neighbours, is joylessly displayed. Here four girls sit tense over their sewing-machines, silent and unsmiling, motionless but for the quick twist and tug of their fingers. There a solitary shirt-sleeved man is hunched among his files and calculators, beneath the dazzling light of his naked bulb,

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dead to all else and perhaps to himself. Along the way eight or nine families seem to be packed into one room, and one glimpses only infant limbs, waves of drapery, buckets, black loose hair, bedclothes and grinning mop faces, as though some perpetual and appalling farce is being played inside.

Every room is ablaze, every room full, and across the intervening gloom one hears radios, clicking machines, shouts and children's screams. In another city all that life over there might be a solace, a reminder that if you happen to be alone that night, all around you is the warmth of community. In Hong Kong it is different. Nobody out there seems to take the slightest notice of anyone else—let alone of you as, peering through the orange fabric curtains, your wan Western face gazes aghast across the chasm.

At another Chinese extreme, consider the walled village of Kam Tin, which stands antique and morose in the heart of the New Territories. This is Chineseness of a very different sort. It is not a very large walled village, but it is one of the tourist sights of the colony, for better than any other local monument, perhaps, it evokes the continuity of the Chinese presence—antedating as it does by four centuries the arrival of Her Majesty's frigates upon the foreshore. Kam Tin is Chinese in a testudinate way, a caparaced, scaly way. Modernity has long besieged it, and just across the way there is a garage, and a small supermarket: but the village lies hot and secretive still within its towered walls, and the Teng clan, who built it, live in it exclusively still. Wrinkled crones in black pyjamas and coolie hats guard it, half-heartedly offering a selection of spurious antiques, and an aged man in black directs you to the slot in the wall in which you are invited to place your charitable offering. Then through the wrought-iron gate you pass, and into the brown brick labyrinth beyond.

It is the very opposite of picturesque. Rectangular, dowdy, brown, it reminds me of old Swindon, down by the locomotive works. Everybody seems immensely old in Kam Tin. Old dogs lie about. Old ladies look at you through unglazed windows. Old flies buzz. There is no sound of traffic, for no wheeled vehicles can enter, except for a few old bicycles: so a hush hangs over the place, a very old Chinese hush, pursuing you down the narrow alley-ways, between the drab mud-brick houses, like a venerable reproach, or a dictum. I found it unnerving, and seemed to feel the oldness of Kam Tin clinging to me when I left, impregnating my clothes and clouding my thoughts, until at last I overpowered it with peeled shrimps and fried rice in the floating restaurant at Sha Tin Hoi.

But for a last, blither cameo of Hong Kong's Chinadom, let me take you to the small island which stands, linked by a causeway to the shore, on the edge of Tolo Harbour, north of Kowloon. There is a house upon the island, but we will circumvent it, and scramble around the bluff below until we reach the little point at the end, where the grass is prickly and sun-bleached, and small bright flowers have gone feral from the garden above. Behind us now we may hear a radio from the kitchen or children's laughter from an upstairs room, but before us lies classic China. The bay extends blue and limpid towards the China Sea; beyond it lie low tawny hills, speckled here and there with villages, hot, dusty, arid: and in the still basin below us ten or twelve junks lie, tied close together in twos and threes, like enamel ships.

Their awkward but elegant forms, high-prowed, top-heavy, are reflected liquidly in the water, and sometimes there are signs of life upon them: men moving ropes about, women emerging with pots or laundry, children scrambling among the rigging. Generally, though, they seem to lie there motionless, as if for show. It is a scene of infinite calm and balance, a posed scene. It is as though those painted vessels never move from

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their moorings, but lie there for ever as upon a china plate, lovingly etched and baked in the glaze, and traditionally coloured.

THEY ARE NOT THERE for artistic reasons. They are there to make money. Making money is the purpose of Hong Kong, and it was the hope of profit that induced the British to found the colony in the first place. The great British merchants of Hong Kong, the *taipans* who first made their fortunes in opium and tea, have never relaxed their grip upon the opportunities of the place, and have survived war, depression, and the end of Empire to remain great men of the China coast. "Look, there goes the *taipan*", Chinese people sometimes say, when they see one of the moguls of Jardine Matheson sweep by in his limousine. And though they say it partly in fun (the commonest kind of *taipan* is a Chief Pimp), and partly by force of habit, they also speak out of an empathetic esteem. The British and the Chinese may spring from utterly alien cultures, from opposite ends of the word, but they are fused in the furnace of Hong Kong, and made colleagues by cash.

The rich British still live expensively. They appear with visiting earls in gossip columns, and form a well-known element in the entrepreneurial jet-set that swishes about between London, New York, Tokyo, and Sydney. "I'm so sorry", I was told when I enquired after a friend of a friend, "but Mrs W—— is away in Japan, launching a ship." They have country houses on the delectable eastern shore of Hong Kong island, they have closed-circuit colour television in their boxes at Happy Valley racetrack; and so long have they been on the China coast, if not in person then at least by the proxy of their forbears, that the quirks of Hong Kong life have become their orthodoxies. Peking holds no mystery for them: they have maintained their contacts with China through Celestial Empire and Cultural Revolution, and they regard the aspirations of Boxer and Chou alike with an urbane indulgence. *Plus ça change,* they seem to shrug, and ringing for a specially bound copy of the company's annual report, with their compliments, they draw your attention to last year's highly satisfactory trading account.

Hong Kong nowadays is only their base, and their activities extend, in shipping and trading, banking and insurance, speculation and agency, all over the Far East. Even so their stake in the colony is staggering. Wherever you look there stand the artifacts and enterprises of Jardines, Butterfield & Swire, and the other old houses of the British connection: mammoth new office blocks, enormous shopping complexes, a tunnel under the harbour, the China Motor Bus Company, swank hotels, graving docks, television services. They have their fingers in innumerable pies, and they are still distinctly British. When Jardines built their vast new headquarters building, the tallest structure in Asia unless you count television towers, the architects were Palmer & Turner, the consultant engineers were Mitchell McFarlane, the air-conditioning was by Jardine Engineering Company, the tiling was by Marley, and only the hinges (so I discovered from the board at the construction site) were by Shun Fung.

If the Chinese acquire an alarming new bite and dominance when they leave their homeland, so do the overseas British. British capitalism in Hong Kong retains an edge and confidence it has long lost at home. It actually believes in Progress. The *taipans* are pushing men in a men's world; and their wives, I am told, sometimes get bored with their perpetual enrichment, handed down from father to son, and pine for more modest indulgences, like a concert now and then, or a visiting poet.

THERE ARE POORER BRITONS too, of course. You often see them on the Star ferry, open-necked or cotton-frocked, browned by the China sun, and bearing themselves like what they are —almost the last of the workaday British colonialists.

Some are sailors, and are on their way to the China Fleet Club, that almost legendary institution, familiar to a million matelots, which stands on the edge of the Suzy Wong country beside the waterfront of Wanchai. Some are soldiers—stationed in Hong Kong not to keep the Chinese Communists out, but (as official handouts discreetly say), "to assist the Government in maintaining security and stability", the classic role of British imperial forces. Some are accountants, clerks, or housewives, who speak in Londonish or more probably Surreyish accents, and tend to grumble about the servant problem. Some are technical advisers, or journalists, or air-line pilots, or University teachers. Nearly all are unmistakably British. There are Europeans of many sorts in Hong Kong, and more than 6,000 Americans; but the British vastly predominate—there are

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nearly 30,000 of them—and in some indefinable way they remain different from all the others, too, and even now carry themselves apart.

I loved to sit on the ferry and contemplate these people. They were trapped for me there, like historical specimens, deep in their tabloids or compiling their shopping lists. What a line they represented, I used to think! What generations of exiles culminated in their persons, listlessly looking out across the passing harbour, or doing the crossword puzzle! Their fathers blazed a way across the world, veld to Outback, pioneering in shacks, beachcombing on reefs, disciplining recalcitrant Sioux or bayoneting fuzzy-wuzzies: and here they were beside me, the last of the long parade, indifferent to their origins, unconscious of them perhaps, unexcited on the slat-seated ferry-boat between Kowloon and Victoria.

The boat shudders; the gangplanks clatter down, top and lower deck; the blue-jerseyed Chinese seamen swing open the iron gates; in a trice, as the crowd streams off the vessel and hastens beneath the subway into town, those unobtrusive imperialists are overwhelmed by their Chinese fellow-subjects, four million to 30,000, and you would hardly guess from the look of things that there was a Briton left in the colony at all.

YET BRITONS rule it. The Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Hong Kong is still guarded by Gurkha sentries in his white palace below the Botanical Gardens, and unglamorously installed in rambling Indianified offices, or making do in temporary shacks, the Hong Kong Government is modestly at work. Most of its senior members are British, some of them Chinese-speaking, most of them staunch believers in the rightness of their own methods. They do not merely rule Hong Kong, indeed, they rule it absolutely. Subject only to the distant distracted authority of Queen, Parliament, and Whitehall, the Governor and his officials are as all-powerful now as their colleagues were a century ago in India or Bermuda. No local legislature restrains them. The only elected representatives in Hong Kong are members of the Urban Council, and even they are in a minority, and represent only a minute proportion of the population. Both the Executive and the Legislative Councils of the Colony are entirely *ex officio* or nominated by Government, and both are presided over by the Governor. The Empire lives in Hong Kong. With names like Luddington, Haddon-Cave, or Lightbody, with duck suits and straw hats, with a formidable expertise and a truly dedicated zeal, the gentlemen of the Hong Kong administration direct the affairs of the last of the great Crown Colonies superbly in the tradition of the later Raj.

"Hong Kong subscribes", one distinguished public official observed to me, "to Victorian economic principles. These are the only economic principles that have ever been *proved*. . . ." *Taipans* may complain of too much official interference: officials believe themselves to be operating the last of the *laissez-faire* administrations. Hong Kong is a free port; it is charged by the energies of free enterprise; even the great civic works, the public transport, the harbour tunnel, are financed largely by private money. Government in Hong Kong is unobtrusive partly because it cannot afford flamboyance, but partly because it believes its function to be supplementary, "Our job is to do the things private enterprise cannot or will not do, and to keep the whole caboodle on the rails."

It suggests to me a conscientious vicar in a particularly well-heeled parish, a parish pagan, rather condescending but not by and large unfriendly. Until the 1950s the British Government regarded Hong Kong more or less as any other colony, and schemes were prepared for constitutional reform. Today there is no pretence to liberalism, but the colony's officials are essentially philanthropic in their approach. No taint of Jingo vulgarises their attitudes, and they are rightly hurt when visitors suspect them of snobbery or racialism. They are the antithesis of your stock Imperialists, and are proud of their Hong Kong chiefly as a haven, which has welcomed so many millions of refugees, over many generations, and has done its best to support them fairly. Nor are they in the least chauvinist. It did not seem to me, I innocently observed to one of them, that Hong Kong *felt* British at all—look at the way the traffic moved! "I agree with you there", he replied. "Good road manners are dead in England. . . ."

THEY SAY THAT pragmatism was always an imperial quality, and in Hong Kong it is certainly evident. The British rulers of the place have been obliged to live not for the ideal, not even for the principle, but for the situation. Other colonies may have had leisure for introspection, for historical awareness and cultural ambitions; Hong Kong has no museum, a public library

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smaller than Fiji's, and an archive only established in the past couple of years. Some British colonies were always fortresses; some were settlements; some were transit stations on the imperial routes. Hong Kong was always a place of profit, and when Captain Ellis spoke of "safety" and "honour" all those years ago, he was really thinking of capital and dividends. To this over-riding purpose the Hong Kong Government has always adapted its attitudes, and very successfully too. It has had few rebels within its ranks, demanding emancipation or self-government; it has recognised itself primarily as a law-and-order government, perpetually holding a ring, and with works of goodwill thrown in as a side-line; and to every criticism it offers, like my friend on the Peak, that last rationalisation of imperial pragmatism: *"It works!"*

IN SOME WAYS it is an ugly mechanism. Hong Kong is a very beautiful place, full of colour and of splendour, but it is charmless. It is hard, and oddly lacks bounce. It ought to lift the spirits, with its marvellous vistas, its perpetual surge of energy, its contrasts and its surprises: in fact it somehow falls flat. Hong Kong is popularly coupled with Rio, Sydney, and San Francisco as one of the loveliest harbour cities in the world. Of the four it is perhaps the biggest and certainly the richest, but to my tastes it is also much the least invigorating.

I think this is partly because, for reasons I cannot analyse, the confrontation between Chinese and British lacks piquancy, or even style. It is rather an *ordinary* meeting. I went one day to visit an acquaintance in one of the big apartment blocks that have lately been built beside the Kowloon waterfront. These are inhabited almost entirely by Chinese, but they look rather like a corner of Sheffield, say, or inner London, and offer a peculiarly dispiriting combination of life-styles. Into those moulds of concrete, by London Council out of Radiant City, have been squeezed all the dourest qualities of the Chinese. The buildings are indistinguishable from each other, there seem to be a million more or less identical tenants on every floor, and nobody appears to know anybody else. It is as though they are all in immediate competition with one another, for air or living space, so that the bonhomie is removed from Yorkshire, the comradeship from Canton, and one is left with a formidable but unlovely hybrid.

Formidable, because there is no breath of the haphazard to it. The Hong Kong Chinese is a man of relentless logic, and rational foresight is his forte. I even sense it in the tumbled picturesque market streets of Victoria, which straggle higgledy-piggledy up the lower slopes of the Peak, but in which, I suspect, absolutely nothing is left to chance. And there is a bleak sense of order to the industrial centres of the New Territories, where the powerful new factories, set in green gardens but towered over by chimneys, derricks and elevators, look like model factories in an exhibition. I am reminded sometimes of Rhodesia: not just in the newness, and the determination, but in a certain bland suggestion of muffle—as though Hong Kong is not quite sure of its own identity, and lacks fizz accordingly.

I felt this on social levels, too. I went to a very grand dinner party one evening, and sensed it strongly there. The food was sumptuous, the service velvety, the conversation civilised. About half the guests were British, the other half Chinese, all well-heeled, all well-travelled, all equally Hong Kong: and after a while, I found, it was difficult to distinguish one from the other. They all spoke more or less the same upper-class English. They mostly shared the same kind of humour. They dressed alike, with slight cultural variations like split skirts or Old Etonian ties. It is true that one elegant young Chinese of indeterminate profession ("Well, I call myself a merchant on my passport—it sounds romantic, don't you think?") did admit to me that he sometimes felt isolated between the two cultures, but for the most part everyone seemed suavely at home on the cross-benches.

Yet I hope my host will not think me ungrateful if I say that the evening lacked fire. Perhaps they were all too alike? There was none of the mordant fun of a similar evening in India, say, where East and West parry each other with a wary and exhilarating love-hate. In Hong Kong the profit motive paradoxically de-fuses life, and makes nearly everyone conformists beneath the skin.

IT OCCURRED TO ME that evening, as I contemplated my fellow-guests, that the Chinese knew far more about the British than the British knew

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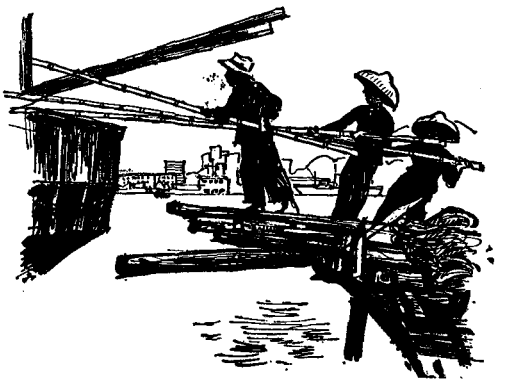
about the Chinese. The British had been on that coastline for 150 years, and had created Hong Kong: but in a deeper sense the Chinese had been there always. The British would mostly go home in the end, to Scotland or to Sevenoaks: the Chinese were there to stay. Few of the British spoke a Chinese language: all the Chinese spoke English. My merchant friend could doubtless have given me a fairly succinct account of, say, the difference between Presbyterian and Anglican: but no Briton there could have told me much about Taoism, or ventured to explain the nature of Chinese loyalty. The British of Hong Kong know a great deal about China as a trading opportunity, but when it comes to the profounder complexities of Chinese life, they are generally not much less ignorant than you or me.

Why should they be? They stick to their last, and this limited range of British vision suits the Chinese too, Hong Kong is in armistice. You mind your business, the arrangement seems to say, and I'll mind mine. The British seldom pry into the privacies of Chineseness: the Chinese do not often agitate for change. Almost everywhere in the old Empire foreign government came to be considered, rightly or wrongly, the worst sort of government there was. Not in Hong Kong. Government is a chore there. Let the barbarians do it.



They do it well, but not of course perfectly. After a few days in Nathan Street I moved over to Hong Kong island and put up at the Hilton. From my window there I looked down upon the Supreme Court, and often I observed, in a space largely and freshly painted NO PARKING, the large black Daimler of the Chief Justice. The *South China Morning Post* noticed the car too, while I was there, and photographed it in this self-incriminating station, but there was no response from His Honour, and the Daimler still stood there when I left.

It has not been suggested, I think, that in any larger way the judiciary of Hong Kong is corrupt. Its distinction is more doubtful. I went to court to watch the judges in action, and through all the usual flummery of English law, the wiggery and the pedantry, the royal ciphers and the stained mahogany, thought I detected up there on the bench no more than a provincial adequacy —sound unremarkable men, I thought, lucky (like most judges) to be elevated to such dramatic dignities. One does not, of course, expect brilliance from a colonial bench—a schoolmasterly fairness and honesty are all one can reasonably demand. In Hong Kong, though, a place full of cleverness, this judicial plod strikes one the more flaccidly, like a dollop of pastry in a rhubarb pie: and when I asked lawyers about it they ascribed it to a lack of incentive or opportunity among local Chinese to become judges themselves.

The reasons they gave were unimpeachable, and were concerned with salaries and legal education: but I could not help wondering if another cause might not be Hong Kong's infinite prospects of profitable mayhem, far more easily tapped by astute advocates than by honourable judges. Hong Kong is fearfully corrupt, and always has been. Before the last war the Government itself was involved in an intricate scandal—many a Hong Kong cupboard has its skeleton —and ever since the foundation of the colony the natural instincts of the place have bred skullduggery and intrigue. Hong Kong is one of the great drug entrepôts of the world; its protection rackets are ubiquitous; much of its daily life is based, in one degree or another, tacitly or explicitly, upon squeeze.

Hong Kong is touchy on the subject. The colony has had some bad publicity lately, and the wise visitor, if she wishes to be invited to dinner next time, treads carefully around the subject of graft. "You don't understand!" they say. "This is Asia. Standards are different here. Compared with Saigon or Djakarta, Hong Kong is lily-white!" The truth must be, though, now as ever, that Empire cannot have it all ways. It must honour its own values. Old China hands may justifiably claim that Hong Kong, for all its myriad rackets, for all its 100 murders a year, for all its crooked policemen and opium entrepreneurs, is a more law-abiding city than most of its peers. Admirers of the British tradition still expect higher standards of the last and greatest of the Crown Colonies.

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Yet even as I write, I hear within my own mind charges of hypocrisy. I have always relished the freebooting side of Empire, the swashbuckle, the fur traders, the nabobs, the merchant adventurers. Yet what was that dashing enterprise but romanticised squeeze? I prefer to think of it as an eye for the main chance, but it was frequently not very different from your Hong Kong skullduggery, and dealt often enough in the same commodities—"*chasing the dragon*", as the Hong Kong underworld still calls the pursuit of narcotics. Hong Kong is no more than a figure of imperial enterprise—good and bad in collusion, as they were in the old Empire itself.

I WOULD GUESS THAT the vast majority of Hong Kong government officials are there simply to do their best, while the vast majority of everybody else are there to get what they can. Virtually every private citizen of this colony is a speculator and a capitalist, from the richest developer to the poorest labourer.

I have observed some striking social contrasts in my time, *barriada* beside Lima penthouse, Rollses in Calcutta, oil sheikh and Bedu scavenger, but few have struck me as more curiously disturbing than the contrasts between Chinese rich and poor in Hong Kong. I am not sure why this is. It is not exactly a moral shock, for as I say virtually all Hong Kong people are animated by the same impulses, and the poor beggar would certainly be the swell investor if he could. It is certainly no post-imperialist shame: I am of the opinion that the British Empire has done well by Hong Kong, on the whole. Perhaps it is because the apparent homogeneity of the Chinese, their compact sense of racial power and superiority, somehow makes disparities among them seem out of character. "I believe the Chinese", wrote the British General Lord Wolseley in 1903, "to be the most remarkable people in the world, and destined to be one of the master races." The Chinese have some such effect upon most of us, and it is disconcerting to realise that they too have their winners and losers, their ups and their downs.

I felt this irrational shock most forcibly when I returned to Kowloon one afternoon after a visit to one of the enormous settlement areas in the New Territories, where refugees from China proper are helped and housed. Out there a sense of barely escaped calamity informed the scene. The place was partly a housing area, partly a huddle of shacks, and it possessed all the trappings of 20th-century misfortune: the bundles of poor possessions, the ramshackle shelters of wood and canvas, the cluttered strings of washing in the tenement buildings, emaciated old people, potbellied young, hunger, bewilderment, good works, smells of dirt and open-air cookery, makeshift markets, bicycles, noise, congestion, runny noses—all the standard paraphernalia, in fact, of modern misery, translated this time into the Chinese idiom, and deposited upon the foreshore of Hong Kong. It was unsurprising to me. I had grown up with it, like any wanderer of my age, and it did not look out of place against the harsh rocky hillsides of Hong Kong.

But when I drove back to Kowloon I dropped into the Peninsula Hotel for tea, and there I discovered a Chinese contrast I had not experienced before. I was familiar enough, of course, with rich Chinese of the old kind, with collections of ivory carvings, and curly stone lions in their gardens. They offered no real contrast to the poor of the resettlement areas, but seemed to me of the same tradition, only temporarily more successful—exchangeable perhaps in the last resort, so that the beldames of the tenement could, given a damask dress and a pair of golden slippers, quite easily preside over the dinner table of the Victoria connoisseur. Now, however, ordering their cream cakes and India tea to the strains of Gershwin from the promenade

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orchestra, I observed an altogether new kind of Chinese upon display, so alien to those people of misery, so utterly distinct that for the first time I realised how fissiparous the Chinese civilisation might be after all.

They frightened me rather, these new Chinese of the Peninsula. They had achieved some new synthesis of their own, freed from their own conventions but by no means subservient to ours. They were all young, and evidently rich, and they had to them a kind of stylised menace, suggestive of Kabuki more than Kung Fu. They were taller than Chinese used to be, and slinkier, and they were heavily made-up, and wore fur fabric coats and many rings, and they dyed their hair in streaks, and sat slouched and disdainful in their chairs, reading *Time* Magazine. The expression that our grandfathers used to call enigmatic seemed to have curdled, upon their faces, into an elegant sneer—for they *were* elegant, and handsome too, the girls languid and svelte, the men perhaps the first truly beautiful Chinese I had ever seen.

I encountered their kind often afterwards, making films, eating ice-creams, booking tickets to Zurich, or sweeping in perfumed cars to flood-lit race meetings. They came to dramatise for me the extreme nature of life in the Colony, the violent range of the phenomenon. I sometimes went for my supper, if I had nothing better to do, to the open-air market beside the Macao ferry station, which springs up at sunset and provides a lively spectacle and an excellent cuisine—a bright hissing congeries of stalls, offering everything from monkey wrenches to Thai silks, and spilling hugger-mugger over the car park and into the pavement of Connaught Road. I was always kindly welcomed there, and I generally ate a bowl of aromatic soup, piping hot, exquisitely spiced, nourishingly mucous of texture and compounded chiefly of clams, crabs and bamboo.

One night, though, I decided to eat in my room, and consulting the Chinese menu always available at the Hilton Hotel, ordered a bowl of Crab, Clam and Bamboo Fungus Soup. It arrived aromatic, mucous and exquisitely spiced: but when I compared the price of it with the price of the soup at the market stall, identical in substance and if anything more generous in quantity, I found that the Hilton version cost just 28 times as much.

YET THE BALANCE HOLDS, and I sometimes fancied in Hong Kong a sense of reconciliation—Asia and Europe come to terms. Thirty years ago, when Japan's Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere reached across to Hong Kong, it seemed that Europe's day was ended on the China coast and that Hong Kong would soon go the way of Wei-Hai-Wei, Shanghai, and the other old footholds of the West. The Americans assumed, at the end of World War II, that Hong Kong would be returned to Chiang Kai-shek's China, and to many Britons too that seemed the inevitable dénouement.

The loss of Singapore, in 1941, affected the British traumatically. It was the end of an age. The fall of Hong Kong, six weeks earlier, hardly seems to have affected them at all. By now the years of Japanese Occupation seem almost forgotten even within the Colony: the story is muffled, the tragedy muted, as though people wish not to be reminded of it. I drove out one day to the site of the Stanley prison camp, where most of the British population was confined for nearly four years, and where many died. The prison building is a prison still, and there are some sad tombstones in the graveyard along the road, crudely carved by the prisoners themselves in the midst of their humiliation—"*Skull of Unknown, December 1941*", "*After Life's Fitful Fever She Sleeps Well*", or "*K. S. Morrison, Chieftain, St Andrew's Society.*"

Even in Stanley itself, though, people responded vaguely, perhaps evasively, to my questions: and when I called at the British Army camp which is still there, the soldiers at the guardroom seemed to think of the past as mere legend or superstition—"she's got hold of some information", they told the orderly officer, "about this being where they interned people during the War" —and offered me only macabre and inaccurate anecdotes. I expected to experience some hush or charisma over a place that had seen so much suffering. But no, the sun shone genially over the old compound, the air was fresh, the junks loitered prettily off-shore, and even the beach where 12 Britons were beheaded for having a radio set seemed to possess no air of elegy.

The Japanese left scarcely a mark behind them, except for the ugly tower they superimposed upon the Governor's palace, and they hardly interrupted the progress of Hong Kong—which, in the resilient way of capitalism, resumed its affairs when they had gone almost as though nothing had happened. But the occupation did permanently affect relations between the British and the Chinese—between Britain and Asia, in

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fact. There lives in Kowloon an Irishman, a former member of the Hong Kong Government, who was exempted from internment by the Japanese because of his Irish nationality, and who advised the Occupation authorities about the disposal of sewage (on which he was an expert). After the War the British community, released from the torments of Stanley, reacted fiercely against this man, and he was forced out of the Government service, and ostracised by his colleagues. Today he is spoken of without resentment. His actions have fallen into a gentler perspective; the affront has been tempered by time; what once seemed treason to a cause, even a civilisation, now seems little more than quixotry, or even commonsense. The British in Hong Kong no longer seem to themselves to represent some other, superior order, some uncompromisingly separate set of values. If they have lost the imperial convictions they have lost the delusions too.

BEFORE THE WAR their racial chauvinism was notorious. It survives still, of course, though chiefly in what English sociologists might call the lower-middle-class expatriates, among whom, here as everywhere, a wog is still occasionally a wog. ("They're no good," one of those soldiers assured me, "they don't *want* to understand, and they smell.") On more sophisticated levels I found no trace of it, unless you count bafflement as prejudice. On the contrary, I thought the British rather overdid their admiration of Chinese abilities, and could not help feeling, when inefficiently cheated by a kiosk girl, or unconvincingly blarneyed by a taxi-driver, that the Chinese sometimes underestimated *us*.

Certainly the European community is full of Sinophiles. Some are scholars, devoted to the Chinese arts and sciences. Some just admire the industriousness of the race. Some, like me, respond to the almost Scottish mixture of kindliness and reserve so often to be discovered behind the Chinese mask. One well-known Hong Kong Englishwoman takes her bicycle to Peking for an annual holiday, and potters about the Celestial City sketching. An earlier generation of Britons was able to despise China, and to speak of Hong Kong as a notch cut by a woodsman on the trunk of China, to mark the spot for a later felling. Nobody can despise China now, and so one source of bigotry has been eliminated, to be replaced, if not yet by universal trust or affection, at least by a cautious respect.

Some Britons, following an old imperial tradition, have transferred their loyalties to Asia itself. If anything, indeed, I found less resentment against Peking than against London. Like many another colony, Hong Kong is often at loggerheads with its Whitehall masters, especially perhaps when they are Socialists; and what used to be called "the imperial factor" irritates people as much on the Peak as it once riled Rhodes at Kimberley. In particular the issue of convertibility raises local tempers. London insists that Hong Kong's tremendous balances in London should remain in sterling, while the Hong Kong Government, like the Hong Kong banks, would like to diversify them into other, stabler currencies—to the detriment perhaps of sterling itself, but to the advantage of Hong Kong and its four million Chinese. I was reminded again of Rhodesia, at the time of UDI, and wondered if Hong Kong too was ever tempted to break away and constitute itself another City-State, like Singapore. No, I was told, while Peking was prepared to tolerate a British Hong Kong, it would not stomach an independent Chinese State upon its coast.

Well, then, I used to ask, as a supplementary, was there no danger that the Chinese might, in one of their cyclic periods of aggression, simply march into Hong Kong anyway? "Oh I don't think so", was the general tenor of the replies I got. "That wouldn't be very civilised, would it?" This is the tone of reconciliation: and those Britons who have elected to make Hong Kong their home for ever, and who have retired to villages on Repulse Bay, or are living out their years cherished by soft-footed familiars in tapestried apartments of the Peak—those who, by settling for ever in the colony, have become the first properly Hong Kong British—are staying there not because the island flies the British flag still, but because it is truly and irrevocably a corner of China.

A CORNER of China! Behind the relentless push of Hong Kong I often sense something gentler and more haunting: a yearning for China. It is not, obviously, a political yearning, nor even exactly a cultural urge, but only perhaps an instinctive impulse towards that mighty presence over the hills. China! If the name rings marvellously in London or New York, in Hong Kong' where the islands of the Kwangtung shore run away magically into the evening, where the junks chug in each morning from the Pearl River, where the acupuncture doctors practise their mysteries

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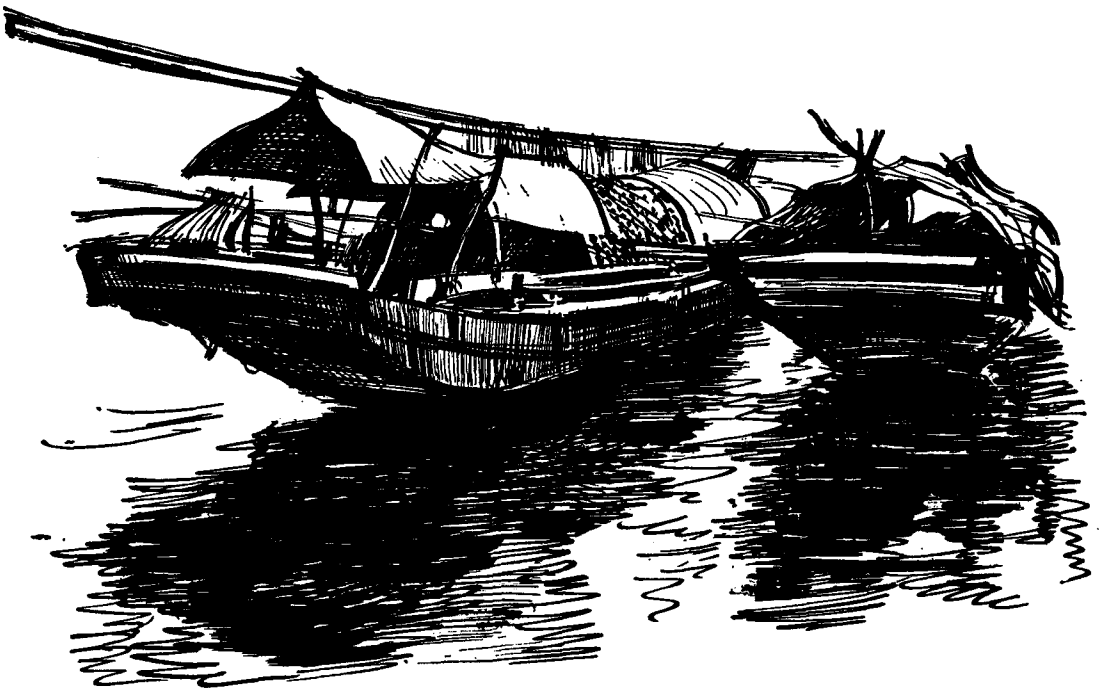
and the Chinese Merchandise Emporium offers you crystallised plums from Hunan—in Hong Kong the name of China is like the word of truth. China! It is the reality that underlies every illusion of Hong Kong, and even the Peak itself, that high place of Western complacency, is really no more than an outcrop of the Kwangtung hills.

BEFORE I LEFT Hong Kong I drove out to Lok Ma Chau, on the frontier. This has become a famous tourist spot. The casual visitor is not allowed at the frontier post itself, beside the Sham Chun River, but a little way behind it there is an observation post upon a hill. There the Hong Kong Chinese have set up souvenir stalls and a café, and all day long a stream of visitors, mostly Japanese, steps from its cars to wander up the winding path and gaze out to the north. The stalls offer a curious variety of wares, mostly from China proper: dingy postcards of Shanghai, table-mats with prancing horses on them, cheap jade bracelets, plaster figurines of ping-pong players, ideological tracts. But in the Chinese way the salesmen do not pester you as you pass on your way to the viewpoint. They know they can catch you on the way back.

It was a lovely day when I was there, and the view seemed almost complementary to the prospect my friend had offered me, two weeks before, looking over Hong Kong harbour from the top of the funicular. If that view was all punch, this was all pull. There across the river lay a silent country, green, blue and mauve—green for the paddy-fields that stained the wide plain, blue for the sheets of water that lay mirror-like beneath the sky, mauve for the hills of the horizon. China! It struck me not so much as peaceful or serene, as *simple*—innocent, perhaps. It looked like a world stripped of its pretensions and complexities, and as I stood there in the sunshine thinking about it, for the first time I felt a stir of that yearning within myself, and found myself looking towards China as though that silent landscape were calling me home.

Home to where? Home to what? As I loitered down the track towards my car, one of the stall-sellers spoke to me quietly, without urgency, across his wares. "Why don't you buy", he inquired, as though he genuinely, if mildly, wanted to know the answer, "the thoughts of Chairman Mao?"—and he held up a small red book, bound in plastic.

Get thee behind me, I said.



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Column

NOT FOR MANY years has the Western world found itself in such a condition of disorder and disarray as it does at the present moment, and wherever one looks within its boundaries one finds it difficult to discover, politically speaking, any good ground for rational hope, least of all the hope which was once embodied in the phrase: *Go West, young man!*

For in the United States the scandals of Watergate have by now assumed such proportions as to appear to threaten some of the foundations of the American government, and to absorb all those energies which should be properly devoted to America's tasks and responsibilities as the natural leader of the Western world. For, by now, a new dimension has been added to the political and constitutional crisis provoked by Watergate. Until recently, Americans might be forgiven for thinking that they knew the worst about Watergate and nothing really new was to be expected in the way of revelation or exposure; all they had to do was to make their minds up about it.

Yet today a new kind of horror has been added to the situation. The release of Mr Nixon's bowdlerised version of the presidential tapes may or may not constitute proof of his guilt or innocence of involvement in the Watergate cover-up. What they do provide, however, without a shadow of doubt, and in a form which inspires even Mr Nixon's most devoted supporters with feelings of disgust and humiliation, is evidence of that general atmosphere of moral squalor and degradation which has filled the White House during Mr Nixon's tenure of office. Even the most cynical American finds it hard to bear that political discussion in the White House is conducted in language more suited to the barnyard or the barrackroom than the executive mansion of the most powerful country in the world.

Soon, one feels, members of Mr Nixon's staff will be as anxious to conceal their occupation as bankers were during the Great Depression. ("Don't tell my mother I'm a banker. She thinks I play the piano in a brothel.") Mr Nixon may be as innocent as he himself claims to be of all the charges brought against him, though every day this now seems less likely; but he and his staff have reduced the White House to a condition which millions of Americans feel as a personal affront. What is astonishing, and perhaps most revealing of the man, is that Mr Nixon should ever have thought that the tapes could be released, even in an expurgated version, without bringing his character into even greater disrepute. *Le style, c'est l'homme même.* If the style of the presidential tapes is anything to go by, Mr Nixon must be a very bad man indeed. Nothing quite like them has ever been published before, and at the moment they have replaced horror-comics, space fiction, and playboy magazines as America's favourite reading.

THE WORST CONSEQUENCE of Watergate, however, is that it has deprived the Western world of effective American leadership at a time when it is faced by problems which even the most inspired leadership might find intractable; as a result the Western world is in danger of, quite literally, falling to pieces. Today, there is hardly a government in the West which possesses the trust and confidence of its people and is in a position to take the crucial decisions which have to be made unless they are all to be involved in a common political and economic catastrophe. Italy is on the verge of bankruptcy, and there are many who see in her condition a warning of what may happen to Britain in the near future. France is in the throes of a presidential election which has split the country almost mathematically down the centre, and, whatever the result, will add one more precarious and unstable régime to those that already exist in Europe. How de Gaulle would weep! Germany, as a result of events so improbable and implausible that any self-respecting thriller-writer would hesitate to invent them for fear of straining the credulity of his readers, has been deprived of the services of the ablest and most admired democratic politician she has produced since the War. It is as if what Maynard Keynes once called "the great capitalist class" could no longer control the economic and political system which it had created and which its only historical function is to perpetuate.

As for Europe, it is today a geographical expression, which involves none of those high hopes and ideals which have been associated, at one time or another, with the foundation of the European Economic Community, with de Gaulle's conception of a Europe extending from the Atlantic to the Urals, and with Herr Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. There are those who, like the *Economist*, like to believe that this is a change for the better. Europe, says the *Economist*, has for some time now been reduced to a state of paralysis by the power and influence of ineffectual idealists like Herr Brandt, M. Pompidou, and Mr Heath; better to have made a clean sweep of the lot of them, even if this has meant political defeat for Mr Heath, disgrace for Herr Brandt, and death to M. Pompidou. At least it leaves the

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way clear for tough, hard-headed realists, like Mr Jim Callaghan, Herr Helmut Schmidt and M. Giscard d'Estaing or M. Mitterand (according to the *Economist*, it does not matter which), who on the basis of a shrewd calculation of national self-interest will show Europe what she really needs and wants, instead of what she once dreamed of.

There is something wildly improbable and implausible, as in some Cecil B. De Mille billion-dollar Old Testament epic, in a scenario which requires the casting of M. Pompidou as an ineffectual angel beating his wings against reality, or "Big Jim" Callaghan as a shrewd calculator of national and international interests. There is something even more improbable in the idea that Herr Schmidt, M. Giscard d'Estaing/Mitterand, or Mr Wilson/Callaghan are the men to back if one wishes to revitalise the idea of Europe.

The truth is rather that European unity still remains a far-off hope and ideal and that only those with the faith to act upon the evidence of things unseen are capable of translating it into a reality. We cannot expect that of men who have regard only for the hard facts of national self-interest, however shrewd they may be, and three generations have paid with their blood for their shrewdness. The *Economist* would have been more honest to say that the idea of European Unity is dead or dying. Something will evidently have to replace it, as, in the last century, Bismarck's North German Confederation replaced the idea of a united German nation based upon a democratic federal constitution. Indeed, upon reflection, I am inclined to think that anyone who wonders what kind of Europe will emerge to fill the present vacuum would do well to consider the lessons of the North German Confederation, and I hope the *Economist* will.

HERR BRANDT'S FALL from power was undoubtedly a disaster from an international point of view, but it also had its own domestic complications and ironies. At first sight, it seemed simply the consequence of a serious error of judgment on Herr Brandt's part, for which he accepted full responsibility and therefore, as a democratic statesman, felt it incumbent upon him to resign the office of Federal Chancellor. This was indeed the interpretation which Herr Brandt himself placed upon his resignation. It was, he implied, the only path open to an honest man whose errors had found him out, and by doing so he might make one last, final, contribution to the democratic, parliamentary régime to which he had rendered such signal service. One only wishes that in our own country politicians held so strict a view of their responsibilities.

But nothing, in politics, is quite so simple as this these days. Behind every public political act lies a hidden world of motives and interests which only comes to light when the full glare of publicity is concentrated upon it. Behind Mr Nixon's campaign in the presidential election of 1972, with all its deference to the moral sensibilities of the silent majority, lay the squalid conspiracies of Watergate. Behind the Labour Party's denunciations of land-sharks and speculators lay complicated commercial transactions which Mr Wilson has dignified by the name of "land reclamation." Behind T. Dan Smith's self-abnegating efforts to revitalise the North-East lay a vast network of corruption which is only gradually coming to light. How Balzac would have enjoyed it all!

PERHAPS INDEED THIS WAS always so. A recent biography of Maundy Gregory, for instance, very enjoyably illuminates the kind of corruption which flourished under Lloyd George's last government. Only somehow, in the past, politicians seemed to have been more skilful in suppressing the evidence of their sins, misdemeanours, or peccadilloes, more immune to the occupational hazards which suddenly reveal, behind the respectable public figure, the shadows cast by his hidden life; to the trapdoors, as it were, through which, as he makes his dignified appearance on the stage, he suddenly disappears from view before the astonished eyes of his audience.

One reason for this, of course, is the immense growth in the power, the overall coverage and the technological resources of the communications media, which now ensure that even the most obscure citizen, much less the prominent politician, cannot feel assured of the inviolability of the private, or secret, life. It is as if, in all our activities, we were being secretly tracked by a camera eye which faithfully records everything we do, until at last the moment comes when, for whatever reason, it becomes opportune, or necessary, to display the record to the public, nearly always to our discomfiture, even though sometimes quite fortuitously.

There is a splendid example of this kind of accidental exposure in the case of Herr Brandt and his friend and intimate adviser, the East German spy, Günter Guillaume. A defector from the Soviet Union to West Germany, watching a newsreel one evening, suddenly saw among those attending some conference a long-forgotten and yet familiar face. "But that man was with me in the N.K.V.D. school at Kiev!" he cried, like an Old Etonian recognising a school friend. It was the Chancellor's ubiquitous assistant, Herr Guillaume. Today, nobody's house is his castle; it is a potential television studio.

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BUT THERE IS ANOTHER REASON why the politician today is exposed to unexpected hazards, trap-doors, trip-wires, and that is the unparalleled expansion during recent years of the espionage community. Since the War, espionage has been one of the great growth industries of the world, enjoying all the advantages of the most advanced and sophisticated technologies, immunity from public control, and a freedom of operation which ignores national boundaries. It might be said also to be the only industry in which the Soviet Union has achieved its avowed ambition of overtaking and surpassing the most advanced capitalistic countries.

In this industry, which by now profits by a vast investment both in equipment and in personnel (and in this may lie the seeds of its decay, because as is well known labour-intensive industries are on their way out), it is precisely those aspects over which states and statesmen are most anxious to draw a veil of secrecy which provide its raw material. It has a direct value as a source of information about the operations of competing firms. But it also has an indirect, though not less important, value as a means of confounding, confusing, and thwarting their plans. (The industry is also in a sense a form of game, in which one winning coup is to infiltrate a radical-chic intellectual, preferably as an unconscious agent, into the ranks of the enemy; nothing could be more calculated to create utter confusion and disruption.)

In the case of Herr Brandt the industry's techniques seem to have operated to perfection, in the sense that, while showing a solid profit in the way of information, they have also left behind a number of problems which no one can solve but which, taken together, combine to reinforce all the doubts and suspicions, all the frustration and disillusion, which, in the West at the moment, people are apt to feel with regard to their own governments.

Why should Herr Brandt ever have employed, as a confidential assistant, a man whom his security services already suspected of being a spy? Why, when those suspicions were confirmed, should he have continued to employ the spy and, though Chancellor of the Republic, be content to play the humiliating role of *agent provocateur*, in the sense of feeding him with bogus top-secret information?

The official answer to these questions is that, by acting as he did, Herr Brandt helped to expose the spy Guillaume's accomplices. When Guillaume took a holiday in the South of France, the German security services, in collaboration with their French colleagues, mounted a surveillance operation of such scope and complexity that according to a security source it amounted to a fourth German invasion of France. Is this the kind of operation in which a head of government normally cooperates, and if so, for what reason? And why should these complex and devious manoeuvres have culminated just at the point when Herr Brandt's shaky coalition was about to face a crucial election in Lower Saxony? Was it by the wish of Herr Brandt or of his security services, of which he is constitutionally the master but to which he appears to have acted as a willing and obedient servant? If the second alternative is the case, to whose interest is it that Guillaume should have been exposed at that particular moment? Not certainly to Herr Brandt's or to his government's. But then to whose? To the East German government's or its Soviet master's? But if so, what possible basis now remains for Herr Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, to which both the East and the West German governments were committed? Or was it to the interest of the German security services, still hankering after a restoration of the Christian Democratic régime under which most of its senior officials have made their successful careers?

And what do the East German government and the Soviet Union think of it all? Is Herr Guillaume, the master spy, who "knew everything, saw everything, and was always present" at Herr Brandt's right hand, to be regarded as a spy who failed, because he was finally exposed and his sources of information blocked—or one who succeeded, in the sense that he brought down with him a Federal German Chancellor who enjoyed the universal respect and confidence of the West? And what is more, almost certainly at no cost to himself. For in the strange game of espionage that is played between East and West he is likely to be exchanged for one or more of the Western spies now in Eastern hands. Some German papers have suggested that it would be a good thing if certain West German security officials went with him. Guillaume himself has demanded that, as a senior officer of the East German National People's Army he should be treated, not as a spy, but as "a prisoner of war."

All these questions and speculations are not the product of my own overheated imagination. They, and many variations on them, are being asked daily and publicly in the German press and on German television, which operate with a freedom which is far less restricted than our own by laws of libel or threats of contempt of court. And in the last week an entirely new theme has been introduced, which is the allegation that in unravelling the complicated skein of *der Fall Guillaume* we must also take into account Herr Brandt's private life, and the possibility that, somehow or other, and in ways that it would be better not to define, blackmail also entered into

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Herr Brandt's disastrous relationship with Herr Guillaume. Indeed, Herr Brandt himself had to take note of the allegation, which is perhaps a measure of how far he has fallen in public reputation as a result of the *l'affaire Guillaume*.

HERR BRANDT'S REPLY to allegations of immorality was a simple one: "I have never pretended to be a saint." I wish some of our own politicians could say the same. Mr Edward Short's admitted involvement with T. Dan Smith has provoked in his defence, not least by himself, testimonies to the purity and innocence of his character and motives which even a saint might find exaggerated. No one could be quite as white as Mr Short has been painted by himself and his colleagues, without ceasing to be human, though that of course is also, in Mr Short's case, a possibility. Listening to the encomiums on Mr Short's character, one feels that his proper place is not in Parliament but at the right hand of God, and one also has the feeling that, but for a few errors, T. Dan Smith would have been sitting on the other side.

In Mr Short's (and his friends') defence of himself against the embarrassment of what they will hardly admit to have been a slight human failing, there has been a complacency and self-righteousness, together with a merciless severity towards the failings of others, to which Mr Pecksniff himself would hardly have dared to aspire. Indeed, I feel that Labour ministers today could do worse than take an hour off every evening (if they can ever snatch an hour from their labours in succouring the weak and making the rich howl for mercy) and devote it to reading a chapter of *Martin Chuzzlewit* and contemplating the immortal image of Mr Pecksniff. If they did, would not even they be tempted to murmur: *Toi! Hypocrite lecteur! Mon semblable, mon frère!*

R

Woman Combing Her Hair by Degas

So the hair, too,
can be played?

She lets it down
and combs a sonata

from it: brown cello
of hair, with the arm

bowing. Painter,
who with your quick

brush, gave us this silent
music, there is nothing

that you left out.
The blues and greens,

the abandoned snowfall
of her shift, the light

on her soft flesh tell us
from what score she performs.

R. S. Thomas

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Dannie Abse

Florida

Not one poem about an animal, she said,
in five, six volumes of poetry,
not one about The Peaceable Kingdom.
An accusation. Was she from the R.S.P.C.A.?
Your contemporaries have all composed
inspired elegies for expired beasts;
told of salmon flinging themselves up
the sheer waterfall; cold crows,
in black rags, loitering near motorways;
parables of foxes and pheasants,
owls and voles, mice and moles,
cats, bats, pigs, pugs, snails, quails;
so why can't you write one, just one *haiku*?
Oh, I said, Oh!—then wondered if she knew
the story of the starving dowager.

The lady looked as solemn as No.
Well, during the French Revolution,
the dowager, becoming thinner and thinner,
invited other lean aristocrats to dinner.
That night the guests saw (I continued)
slowly roasting on a rotating spit
the dowager's own poodle, Fido,
who proved to be most succulent.
So they made a feast of it.
Afterwards, the dowager sighed,
fingering the pearls about her neck,
sighed and said in noble French,
(I translate) What a damn shame Fido
isn't alive to eat up all those nice
crunchy bones left upon the plate.

My story over, I waited for applause. We'd
never cease from crying, she said,
if *one* insect could relate its misery.
Quite, I said, looking at my paws.
In Florida I saw a floating log
change and chase and swallow up
a barking dog. Hell, I said, an alligator?
A museum snake, too, in Gainesville,
Murder City, I can't forget,
poor black priapus in an empty case
lifting up its head for food not there.
With your gift I'd make a poem out of that.
So try, she said, do try and write
a creature poem and call it *Florida*.
I closed my eyes and she receded.

I thought of tigers and of Blake,
I thought of Fido and his bones.
No, no, she cried, think of Florida.
I saw the hotels of Miami Beach,
I heard waves collapsing ceaselessly.
No no, she said, think again, think
of Florida, its creature kingdom.
Like a TV screen my imagination
lit up to startle the ghost of Blake
with my own eidetic ads for Florida:
first, that black frustrated snake erect,
then two grapefruit inside a brassiere.
Open your eyes, the lady screamed, *wake up*.
I'm a poor bifurcated animal, I apologised.
Eagle beagle, bug grub, boar bear.

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Gavin Ewart

The Theory of the Leisure Class

In those huge Victorian novels that were written during the time when Tennyson
was occupied with Marianas and Mauds
people were saying things like "What do you think, my dear sir, in general,
of pious frauds?"
and the language was pompous in the extreme and you might guess they one and all
were as cold-blooded as saurians;
though we know now they all had Secret Lives and were having a high old time with those
Other Victorians.

There were *malades imaginaires* and interesting invalids and ladies with
permanently weakened constitutions,
while the rough gin-drinking populace starved or enjoyed themselves at
public executions.
The ambition of the wealthy was, quite seriously, to do absolutely nothing but
to drink, to ride, to dance, to flirt.
Gambling for high stakes, soldiering, politics, the buying of a new horse
or a new skirt.

These were the only approved interests. Making money was trade. It must have been
very gentlemanly but boring,
especially for the ladies, who weren't allowed—like their husbands and boy friends—
to go off whoring.
Governesses suffered most. They had to be well-behaved examples and quite
preternaturally respectable.
They couldn't get drunk or encourage (or satisfy the desires of) men,
however delectable.

In a hundred years or so we've changed, with our haircuts and our democratic
adolescents in classless clothes,
though those with the wealth don't show many signs of being terribly
different from those
whose motto (What We Have We Hold) they held—as Mr Mantalini might say—
"like some demm'd vempire",
and our commercial predominance hasn't survived two wars and the disposal
of an Empire.

Almost every class now is a leisure class, occupied (as it might be) with
The Who, the Beatles or Bingo,
turned on by the telly, passively entertained by electronic football,
Ken Russell, Ringo.
It all makes one think of bread and circuses, of those century-gone lives
idle and under a blight;
how William Morris, who wanted handicrafts instead of machines, might very well
have been right.

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Anthony Thwaite

Rescue Dig

In a fading light, working towards evening,
Knowing next day the contractors will be there,
Impatient earth-movers, time-is-money men,
And the trench, hastily dug, already crumbling
(No leisure for revetments), you're suddenly aware
Of some recalcitrant thing, as when your pen
Stubs at the page
And slips stubbornly, tripped by a grease-spot, dry
Shadow-writing. The trowel hits the edge,
Solid against solid, perhaps pottery,
Perhaps bone, something curved and flush
With earth that holds it smooth as yolk in white
And both within their shell. Feel round it, go
Teasing its edges out, not in a rush
Of treasure-hunting randomness, but quite
Firmly yet tactfully, with a patient slow
Deliberation, down
Round the bounding line that holds it, up
Its cupped outline (grey or brown?
The light is bad), letting the soil slip
Smoothly away. Too quick in your eagerness
And you'll fracture its flimsy shape, be left with scraps
What are these folds on it? A skull's brow-ridges,
Lugs at a pot-rim? Let your hand caress
Its texture, size and mass, feel for the gaps
That may be there, the tender buried edges
Held by the earth.
Now what you want is time, more time, and light,
But both are going fast. You hold your breath
And work only by touch, nothing in sight
Except the irrelevant spots of distant stars
Poised far above your intent groping here.
Exasperated, suddenly sensing how
Absurd your concentration, your hand jars
The obstinate thing; earth falls in a damp shower;
You scrabble to save it, swearing, sweating. Now,
In the total dark,
You know it's eluded you, broken, reburied, lost,
That tomorrow the bulldozers will be back;
The thing still nameless, ageless; the chance missed.

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Dr Fromm's Attempt at a Cure

By Kenneth Minogue

IT IS NOW over thirty years since Erich Fromm began to interpret totalitarian movements as responses to neurotic symptoms. *The Fear of Freedom* when it first appeared in 1941 was an immensely exciting book. It clearly owed much to Freud and Marx, but managed to avoid the aridities of either persuasion. It assumed a generous breadth of liberal values while at the same time appearing objective and detached in its study of repulsive phenomena. Among the flood of literature devoted at that time to the crisis of modern man, Fromm's work stood out; and although later empirical work has not been kind to the thesis that it was the uprooted who flocked to support Hitler, his exploration of the link between the strains of modern individualism and the drift towards submissive massive movements has not ceased to provoke useful thought.

Since those days, Fromm has continued to write a string of admonitory books about the need for love, and about the shallow insincerities that take the place of real human relations in modern society, particularly in his adopted America. He became a kind of Dr Spock for the grown-ups; and like that much maligned paediatrician, he was never entirely convinced by the widely-held psychological dogma that early childhood is the time when we lay down the tracks along which we are doomed to puff for the rest of our lives. Fromm kept to his own course during the 1950s, when his particular sort of message was out of vogue, indeed even slightly seditious. He even retained his integrity during the '60s, when men of similar thoughts (such as Herbert Marcuse) became the mascots for one or other of the noisy sects of the time. It is out of the excitements of those days that his present synoptic work has come.[1]

One way of describing the central project of Fromm's intellectual life is to say that he has tried to fuse Freud and Marx. In his early career, he was prominent among the younger Freudians who believed that Freud's preoccupation with parents led him to ignore the fact that parental behaviour was essentially social behaviour. This powerful principle enabled links to be forged between neurosis and the class struggle. The central idea of repression is common to both Freud and Marx, and any extended discussion of sadism tends among socially-conscious analysts to turn into a discussion of exploitation.

But full prophetic co-partnership was blocked by an important and widely explored divergence. Freud had always remained a pessimist, believing that civilisation necessarily imposed costs upon man's instincts, while Marx had attributed these costs to the social structure of capitalism. Once liberated from class fetters, men would enter into their true humanity in which head and heart could once more be united. So far as the needs of prophecy are concerned, Marx had to become the dominant partner; he was, after all, a professional prophet, whereas Freud had been a doctor first, his wider speculations being an amateur extension of his technical concerns. It is significant that the first and still the most influential vulgarisation of Freud has been to understand human ills as the result of "repression" (sexual or political, and often both). Given this Reichian transformation, Freud and Marx could appear on the same platform as exponents of the same message. Freud's pessimism could then be presented as a "failure to realise" that instinctual costs derived from the faults of Capitalism rather than from the discontents of civilisation.

IT IS IMPORTANT, however, to be clear about the kind of messages here being merged. By contrast with the more traditional kind of prophet who calls us to repentance, or to the realisation of the

[1] *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness.* By ERICH FROMM. Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc. $10.95; Jonathan Cape, £4.50

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plight we are in, Freud and Marx took a typically 19th-century pride in the fact that they were scientific rather than moralistic thinkers. Each purported to produce an objective account of the forces determining our situation, more or less independently of our conscious thoughts. One has to say "more or less" independently, because both men hedged and trimmed on the question of just how far human thoughts and deliberations affected man's situation; and both promised that an understanding of the forces they revealed would lead to conscious self-determination.

This claim to the grandeurs of science, however, needs to be treated with circumspection. Scientists may indeed study the operations of mind, or those of society; but what Freud and Marx were doing is something significantly different. Marx's central subject of inquiry was the alienation caused by exploitation within something he called "capitalism." It was, in other words, something that had from the very beginning been identified as an evil, and this fact makes it very different from scientific inquiry in spite of its evident range and sophistication. It may be objected, of course, that a medical research worker studying cancer is in the same position; but the similarity is illusory. Cancer is a purely physiological process and its evil, if you will, may be located in the attitude of the inquirer. In the case of an idea like "capitalism" an element of moral revulsion has actually been built into the concept itself. Freud's concern with neurosis is, to a large extent, on the same footing. As he had himself to recognise, some forms of behaviour which he regarded as "neurotic" had been consolidated in religious or cultural rituals where they were widely regarded as ordinary human behaviour. But Freud did not have to face this problem directly because he worked within a medical world whose accepted aim was cure. It was only as his thought developed (and as the hints it provided were taken up by often errant disciples) that Freud's potential as a cultural diagnostician became evident. Given that these two powerful minds attracted a massive following of people worried about the plight of modern man, and given also that there can in logic only be one true diagnosis of a whole cultural tradition, it would obviously be tempting to exhibit both as contributors to a single comprehensive diagnosis.

FROMM'S *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* is an exercise of just this kind. Its central subject is human aggression, and the discussion ranges widely over politics, sociology, psychology, ethnology, with psycho-analytic concepts predominating. Although Fromm does make obeisances to the human capacity for deliberation and self-control, his main concern is with the unconscious forces supposed to determine human behaviour. His early concern in the book is with excluding two alternative theories about what these forces are.

One is found in the animal studies of ethologists like Konrad Lorenz, who tend to extrapolate from the animal to the human world, and are tempted to view human aggression as the inheritance of our animal nature. Fromm thinks that this suggestion is not entirely beside the mark, and concedes the existence of a sort of natural or (as he calls it) "benign" aggression which responds directly to a threat. But this kind of aggression clearly cannot explain war and the many kinds of domestic violence which arise in cases where the organism is not obviously threatened.

Nor is Fromm impressed by the Behaviourist view (particularly as represented by B. F. Skinner) that aggression is the result of bad conditioning, and may be dealt with by conditioning men in the future for peaceable behaviour. Fromm's rejection of neo-behaviourism is likely to command our sympathy. Although he is a powerful believer in "unconscious forces", his aim is the attainment of awareness and insight, whereas Skinner has a totally mechanistic view of human nature. None the less, Fromm indulges in some notably tendentious bludgeoning. "Skinner recommends", he tells us, "the hell of the isolated, manipulated man of the cybernetic age as the heaven of progress." And bursting, as he often does, for emphasis into italics: "In the last analysis, *neobehaviourism is based on the quintessence of bourgeois experience: the primacy of egotism and self-interest over all human passions.*" The significance of these remarks—and there are many of them—is that Skinner's views are morally unacceptable to Fromm; but it is a moral unacceptability which has been uncritically transposed into something parodying scientific terms.

INSTINCTIVISM AND BEHAVIOURISM, then, find the cause of aggression respectively in nature and nurture. Fromm seeks to avoid this dilemma by establishing a theory of character structures which play an independent role in human life, even though they clearly do arise from the interaction between inheritance and environment. Further (and here Fromm builds his bridge to Marx) the main feature of environment is the society in which we live.

Society, in this kind of diagnostic writing, involves history; and Fromm is entirely within its traditions by supplying us with an argued account of the human past (which is to say, for practical purposes, the European and Middle Eastern past), in which man falls from grace. A Fall from Grace in earlier time is necessary in this kind of

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writing in order to make intelligible the Return to Grace hoped for in the future. Primitive man, living by hunting and gathering food, was not (in Fromm's view) the bloodthirsty creature constructed by imaginations cradled in the doctrine of progress. Fromm, however, reverts several times to the bones of Peking Man from which the brain had apparently been deliberately removed. The point here is that if the evidence of pre-history suggests that early man was violent and aggressive, Fromm's thesis about benign aggression would have to be abandoned. His conclusion is, therefore, that the removal of the brain may have been a ritual act, but that we know too little to be sure about it, and that we certainly can't be entirely confident that violence was involved. It is clear that pre-history, in which Marx's primitive communism was also located, is a useful screen on which to project ideological conceptions of this sort. The evidence is conveniently sparse. By the time the evidence does begin to appear, the Fall has occurred. Men have taken up their abode in cities, and consequential changes include the creation of authorities, hierarchies, commerce and patriarchalism, all things easily recognisable in this type of literature as the very blights of the modern world. The basis of culture moved (as Fromm puts it) from the womb to the mind. In effect, with the appearance of technology, the instincts became the psychological proletariat of the civilised mind.

BUT BEFORE WE CAN properly consider Fromm's account of the deformations to which instincts became subject in historical society, we need to look again at the central problem he has posed. Terms like "aggression" and "destructiveness" (in common with their conceptual sibling "violence") are often used with sloppy indifference to at least one elementary ambiguity. They may refer to feelings, generally a rage of the mind; or they may refer to consequences. "Aggression" tends to be reserved for feelings, "destruction" for consequences. But because of the mediation of human judgment, there need be no single type of connection between them. Intellectuals in the grip of a conviction will suffer enormous passions with no more obvious consequence than the stabbing of a persuasive forefinger. A psychopath, by contrast, may well kill for what he experiences as a trifling resentment. There is a further difficulty. Should we count executioners as aggressive? The result of their work is death, but their behaviour is simply the carrying out of a professional task. Fromm does not really face up to this question. When it comes to supplying a definition, he tells us that aggression is "all acts that cause, and are intended to cause, damage to another person, animal, or inanimate object. . . ." Taken literally, this would turn the making of omelettes into an aggressive act; but we must refrain from such pedantry. The important point is that the simple conjunction "and" is ambiguous here because we are not sure whether both conditions, namely the *intention* and the *damage*, are necessary to constitute the aggression.

The reason why Fromm hedges this question is that the case of American bombing of North Viet Nam lies disturbingly at the back of his mind. The destructive consequences of such bombing are clear enough, but where is the "aggression"? It is not convincingly to be found in the minds of the airmen who are merely obeying orders; nor even in the minds of policy-makers in Washington, for whom destruction is merely the means to bring about a political effect. Fromm's solution is to set up the confused category of "conformist aggression." But it is clear that the "conformism" and the "aggression" are different and largely unrelated phenomena. It seems equally clear that the case of Viet Nam is, in Fromm's mind, a superficial layer deposited over what are for him the far more striking horrors of the Second World War.

IT WOULD SEEM, THEN, that Fromm's treatment of aggression is such as to extend the concept as far as possible, and also to obliterate the important distinction between glorying in destructiveness (which is, no doubt, a possible state of mind) and the use of damage to attain an object. Here—and as we shall see, elsewhere—Fromm does not really take human conflicts, whether moral, social or political, entirely seriously. He reduces them, in a familiar psycho-analytic fashion, to symptoms. More generally, we may complain that this is a subject whose serious discussion involves a good number of philosophical preliminaries, and that Fromm has skimped them.

THE EXPOSITORY ADVANTAGES Fromm gets from his conceptual vagueness is that he is able to insert a variety of moral judgments into a theory of human development which constitutes the spine of his argument. Men are presumed to have a variety of needs whose satisfaction constitutes happiness. These needs are a pretty miscellaneous collection, and their significance can best be grasped if we attend to some of the examples Fromm supplies. One need is said to be for a "Frame of Orientation and Devotion", in discussing which Fromm tells us:

> "The objects of man's devotion vary. He can be devoted to an idol which requires him to kill his children or to an ideal that makes him protect his

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> children; he can be devoted to the growth of life or to its destruction. He can be devoted to the goal of amassing a fortune, of acquiring power, of destruction, or to that of loving and of being productive and courageous. He can be devoted to the most diverse goals and idols; yet while the difference in the objects of devotion are [sic] of immense importance, the need for devotion itself is a primary, existential need demanding fulfilment regardless of *how* this need is fulfilled."

Several things are immediately evident about this very typical passage. One is that Fromm is having things both ways—simultaneously admitting that the objects of devotion are "of immense importance" and yet reducing them to mere expression of the need.

Abraham, for instance, preparing to sacrifice Isaac at Jehovah's command, actually believed in what he did, and it is obviously reductionist of Fromm to see him as satisfying a need for "orientation and devotion." Fromm's kind of theory by-passes the question of the truth of Abraham's belief, in favour of a functional view of human nature. Fromm is not prepared to say that most human devotions are actually false; he is not interested in truth. But he does have a clear line about what devotions ought to be rejected, and what ought to be accepted. This is clear from the moralistic pairing of the examples he gives. Abraham's "idol" is compared to love of children, while "amassing a fortune" is clearly a sinister form of devotion in contrast with "being productive", even though it might well, in many circumstances, amount to exactly the same thing. Here, as throughout the argument, loaded disjunctions explode before the eyes with an effect that cannot always be attributed to the rather more austere central argument. Later, for example, as we discover that sadism and necrophilia are the two extremes of bad character-structure, the latter being worse than the former, we find that sadism is exemplified in terms of Himmler (a Nazi subordinate) and Stalin (a corrupt inheritor of Marx), while necrophilia is exemplified in terms of the arch-villain, Hitler himself. Exemplification takes up a good part of the book, and is part of a discursive connection between a more or less technical argument on the one hand, and the message of salvation on the other.

IT WILL BE CLEAR from the detail already given that Fromm is to a large extent still preoccupied with the images of his youthful thought, and that the contemporary world is but a pale shadow of those fundamentals which were revealed in the totalitarian crisis of the Second World War. It is in such passages that Fromm's remoteness from real life appears, as when he breathtakingly remarks that the lower middle classes "suffer from scarcity in all material and cultural areas and lead a life of unmitigated boredom." Prophecy of the kind Fromm is writing is almost invariably a middle-class creation, and often casts as heroes remote people with the abstract name of "proletariat." It is remarkable how often this seems to require in compensation a tone of lordly contempt for a collection of people specified as "lower middle class" or *petit-bourgeois*. Marx, writing about Fourier in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, exhibits the same curious passion. It is as if the bourgeois intellectual, puffed up with his pride in cultivation, having created an ideal out of the sons of toil, must none the less express the full force of his contempt for uncultivated humanity by setting up a new abstract category to despise.

The fact that Fromm's apparatus of needs includes one for a "character-structure" reveals just how loosely the idea sits to his material. The concept of needs has the additional advantage of straddling the operations of describing and prescribing. It has an empirical base in the things people actually do; and it has a moral superstructure in virtue of the usage by which a need is something that *ought* to be satisfied. The circularity which is the price to be paid for these useful persuasive advantages is clear if we consider the various "characters" that people are described as having:

> "The miser does not ponder whether he should save or spend; he is driven to save and to hoard; the exploitative-sadistic character is driven by the passion to exploit; the sadistic character, by the passion to control; the loving-productive character cannot help striving for love and sharing."

And, of course, *opium facit dormire quia est in eo vertus dormativa* (opium produces sleep because it has a soporific power).

In spite of its circularity, the idea of a character-structure proves very useful to Fromm in other respects. It allows him to glue together aggression as motive, and destruction as consequence, at times when they might otherwise fall apart. And it facilitates the bridge between Society and the Mind which is necessary in any fusion of Freud and Marx.

THE CLIMAX of Fromm's study of aggression is to be found in the two corrupt character-structures described in the second half of the book.

The sadistic character as here described retains many of the features found in Freud's account: he is an anal personality much given to hoarding and "exaggerated punctuality." (How, one

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sometimes wonders, *can* punctuality be exaggerated? What is more on the dot than on the dot?) Fromm's account of sadism, however, makes it clear that he is also talking about exploitation and capitalist society. He seeks to exhibit sadism as more than a mere perversion, and therefore generalises it as "*the passion to have absolute and unrestricted control over a human being.*" (The emphasis is, of course, Fromm's.) Stalin's sadistic character is exhibited in many stories of his cat-and-mouse treatment of subordinates during the 1936–38 purges. Himmler's sadistic traits are also examined in detail and include the fact that on one occasion he talked to a fellow railway passenger relentlessly for six hours: "The intrusiveness with which Himmler forces another person to listen to his endless chatter, thus trying to dominate him, is typical of the sadistic character." Fromm thinks there are many sadists around, and if this is the test, I've met quite a few of them.

The character-structure in which man's natural human instincts really meet their Waterloo, however, is that which Fromm calls "necrophilous." Necrophilia is a perversion that tends to be regarded as a bit of a joke in popular folklore—witness the limerick about the young fellow called Dave who kept a dead whore in a cave. Some of the actual case-studies Fromm presents warrant this hilarity, but all have horrifying undertones. Here again, however, he is concerned not with the perversion, but with a character-structure and social tendency. Necrophilia is defined as "*the passionate attachment to all that is dead, decayed, putrid, sickly; it is the passion to transform that which is alive into something unalive; to destroy for the sake of destruction; the exclusive interest in all that is purely mechanical.*" (Again, this is Fromm's definition and emphasis.) It will be observed again that the language here does not allow any too literal interpretation of this passage. Does it mean that nurses, lovers of Gorgonzola, and civil engineers are necrophilous? Presumably not, but the actual formula leaves this and a few other questions open.

Such is the detail of what is fundamentally a dualistic scheme distinguishing biophiles from necrophiles; and like most dualistic schemata in the social sciences, it has a clear moral ring about it, so clear as to defeat its analytic purpose. The problem it poses appears clearly from the account Fromm gives of the celebrated episode in the Spanish Civil War from which he derives his extended use of the term "necrophilous." It is the occasion when the nationalist General Millan Astray uttered his slogan of *Viva la Muerte!*—and was rebuked by Unamuno in his capacity as rector of the University of Salamanca. "Just now", Unamuno said, "I heard a necrophilous and senseless cry," and he proceeded to utter a graceful apologia for the rational life which, far from leaving the general abashed, provoked him to the further slogan of *Abajo la Inteligencia!* Now it is true that Unamuno, taking much the same line as Fromm, diagnosed General Astray as "a cripple, a war invalid"; but it is certainly not the case that we need to take these very local remarks at their face value. Whatever the actual character of General Astray, the slogan he shouted was clearly meant to be an espousal of heroic Spanish virtues, of a military life lived in indifference to the risks of death. As a moral position, this cannot be met by the reduction of diagnosis, but only by argument in its own moral terms. To take it merely as an instance of the arrest of psychological development by socially conditioned factors is merely a dogmatic evasion of the issue it raises.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM here is, of course, a persistent difficulty for any kind of psychotherapy, as Dr Thomas Szasz has recently been reminding us. The moralistic element of psychoanalysis can usually be concealed behind the distinction between illness and health, and human beings seem to prefer health to illness with such constancy that it may seem pedantic to make too much of the evaluative character of the distinction. But only a little reflection is needed to observe that disease need not always be seen as bad. A 17th-century divine like Richard Baxter who welcomed pain because it was a God-given aid to the remembrance of his pride may these days seem eccentric; but he is taking up a moral and theological position which no scientific proposition can refute. A neurotic who is rendered miserable and incapable by his tendency towards a perversion may well be a suitable case for treatment. But, as the recent history of homosexuality has shown, the situation is different where the person refuses to treat the inclination as a disease, and instead sets up an ethic in terms of which it is permissible or even admirable. Hence the therapist who tries to insist that the homosexual is psychologically ill, without knowing it, is on difficult intellectual ground.

FREUD RECOGNISED these difficulties in trying to prevent psychoanalysis from becoming a moral theory, or indeed passing moral judgments at all. He regarded ethics as in part "a therapeutic effort," but went on to observe that "in our therapy we often find ourselves obliged to do battle with the super-ego and work to moderate its demands." It is obvious that no analysis can proceed if the analyst keeps making remarks like "What! You dreamed you slept with your

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mother? What filthy immoral dreams you have!" Indeed, psychoanalytically, there is no intellectual ground for taking any moral line at all. It is clear, no doubt, that analysts do; and that the man who, at the end of an analysis paid up, thanked his analyst, and announced that he was off on an affair with his mother would not be regarded as cured. But the Freudian position would clearly not be condemnatory. It would have to hedge the moral question by talking in terms of a "lack of insight."

Fromm attempts to get over this difficulty by remarking that "a shared pathology is not experienced as a pathology at all." But then the question becomes: how do we recognise *anything* as a pathology? Examples of such a shared pathology given by Fromm are drug-taking, excessive drinking, violence, and a general craving for strong sensations which Fromm wraps together as a syndrome he calls the "chronic boredom" of man in "technetronic society." But these things are in the first place *morally* disapproved of, and only secondarily construed as *pathological.* When individuals are miserable and come for help, there may be a case for construing their sufferings as illness. But the last thing General Astray or Adolf Hitler, or many other people, happy or unhappy, want to do is go and get cured. Some of them indeed would regard this type of behaviour as itself corrupt. If the matter is pressed really hard, political parties and economic groups may begin to look like the sharing of pathologies. The argument is irreducibly moral.

FROMM'S *Anatomy of Destructiveness*, then, attempts to catch the complex problems of the modern world in a net of abstractions about human development, with the distinction between normal and abnormal development casting a pseudo-scientific light on the moral aims that most concern him. What he has produced is a piece of intellectual technology designed to show us how to Solve the Problems we Face; and like most such endeavours, it brings together many other such messages of hope. Women's Liberation is accommodated in the praise of a matriarchal harmony located in prehistory; and "malign" aggression is closely tied to the oppression of modern women. There is even a remarkable passage of "Children's Liberation" material, in which children appear as an oppressed class waging guerrilla warfare against the oppression of their parents. The real significance of such ideologies is that they seek to do away with the conditions which make *politics* necessary.

What is unsatisfactory about politics is that its solutions are never more than temporary accommodations between the plural moralities of which a modern society is composed. The temptation to resort to a utilitarian ethics in which this plurality of values appears as a collection of varying means to satisfy the same fundamental needs of human nature has always been strong. Who doesn't tend to think of society in terms of a life-affirming centre and a pathological periphery? Disagreement about what actually *is* that life-affirming centre (which disagreement is, in effect, the defining characteristic of what many sects call "capitalism") is the essence of the human predicament. How can such disagreement possibly be solved by the pseudo-scientific wand of ideology? But it is particularly tempting to indulge this hope at a time when conflicts between governments are waged with weapons that may well blow us all up. And the best place to prosecute this reductionist programme is within the field of medicine, where the distinction between the desirable and the undesirable seems most unarguably to be drawn.

But there remains one very practical difficulty. The conflicting parties will not allow themselves to be interpreted as merely "pathological." The intellectual difficulty is that ethics will not go into medicine without remainder. This is why no one —including Dr Fromm—has yet come within whistling distance of exhibiting all human striving as a merely technical confusion about the One True Satisfaction.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Denis Brogan,* Americanist

BRITISH AMERICANists such as myself will find Denis Brogan a hard, indeed an impossible, act to follow. In almost every way he was there first. In comparison I have often felt that we who took the same route were plodders—narrower in range, less fluent, less copious, less inquisitive, less quirky, more academic. Brogan was up there with Alexis de Tocqueville and James Bryce, one of the great trio of European commentators on the United States. Moreover he was linked with them in curious respects. As some of his books show, he was as much at home in France as Tocqueville was—in fact probably more so. With Bryce he shared the experience of having gone to Glasgow University, and then of taking the road south to Oxford; and he had something of Bryce's apparently effortless omnicompetence.

For me as for others Denis Brogan was a phenomenal figure, though perhaps a dazzling rather than an awesome one. To begin with, people of my generation, some twenty years his junior, encountered Brogan as a voice on a BBC radio quiz programme. The voice was that of a dryly humorous oracle, gutturally Glaswegian with other elements mixed in. He seemed to know almost everything, like the Jowett of his Balliol, and to be able to bluff and reason toward the right answer when now and then his amazing retrieval-apparatus required a few seconds' delay. Next in sequence for me was a wish to go to the United States. This was stimulated in part by a reading of his wonderfully crisp, shrewd and high-spirited little book *The American Problem* (entitled *The American Character* in the U.S., 1944). I think it still reveals Brogan at his best, combining verve and erudition so as to excite the envy of journalists on the one hand and professors on the other. I am told that he remained proud of it. Later on, I was staggered to hear the rumour that, back in 1925, Brogan had been rejected in interview by the same benevolent fellowship-committee that gave me a Harkness award in 1947. If the story isn't true it ought to be. It is almost as if the French government had turned down Tocqueville's request to visit the United States in 1831—though with the big difference that in Brogan's case another opportunity soon arose.

FROM THOSE DAYS, I read practically everything that Denis Brogan published about America. There were for instance his two books on American political life, and his many reviews and articles. These appeared all over the place, on both sides of the Atlantic: in the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Spectator*, *Harper's*, and of course ENCOUNTER. His collections of these occasional pieces—*American Themes* (1948) and *American Aspects* (1964)—confirmed one's near-certainty that he had also been the author of lots of unsigned reviews in the *Times Literary Supplement*. The Brogan style was inimitable and unmistakable. No one else was equipped to tackle so wide a spread of "themes" and "aspects." True, he had his favourite subjects, such as government and politics or the American Civil War, which he tackled with particular relish and expertise. But he seemed almost equally at ease with American religious history, or genealogy, or burlesque and vaudeville, or literature of the kind D. H. Lawrence called "classic." I suspect he was less fond of some sides of modern American life. I don't think he ever praised the "adversary culture" of our times. One of his few hostile reviews was of Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd*, on which I thought him unfair. Even here, it may have been Goodman's prose that particularly irked him. He picked out "having sex" as an uncouth expression indicating what he took to be an uncouth outlook.

Otherwise, the typical Brogan piece could be identified by its good humour. At worst he would usually content himself with amiable gamesmanship by identifying minor errors and omissions. Thus, *X* was actually the second cousin of *Y*, not first cousin; and the author might have noted that *Z* once challenged *X* to a duel. Other Brogan trademarks included a sprinkling of references to Roman history, Latin and French quotations, casual but often arresting generalisations, and a tendency to witty dis-

* See the memoir in the April ENCOUNTER by Sir Herbert Butterfield. D. W. Brogan died in Cambridge on January 5th at the age of 73.

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cursiveness. He also delighted in the wit of other people. He loved to cite "Mr Dooley", the Irish-American saloon keeper invented by the Chicago journalist Finley Peter Dunne. For example, on the Boer War: "On'y armies fight in th' open. Nations fights behind threes and rocks." A characteristic Brogan touch was to add: "That maxim was recently printed at the head of British operations orders." He loved comic verse, including the Stuffed Owl variety:

> *Clean-limbed American boys are not like any others.*
> *Only clean-limbed American boys have mothers.*

And:

> *Across the plains where once there roamed the*
> *Indian and the scout*
> *The Swede with alcoholic breath sets rows of*
> *cabbage out.*

Indeed he used quotation to great effect. He sharpened an explanation of European resentment of America after 1945, for example, by relating the story of Napoleon's answer to the question of why the brothers and sisters to whom he had given thrones were so ungrateful: "Because they think I have cheated them of their share of the inheritance of our father the late king."

In more recent years, though I never knew him well, I was occasionally on the receiving end of Denis Brogan's output, as an editor of things he wrote. Colleagues who have been in his position will concur that it was both alarming and exhilarating. His typed letters—a few hectic, jumbled lines, sometimes almost unintelligible—looked as if he had composed them in a taxi going down a potholed alley. He was so busy with other commitments that he was apt to forget he had promised 5,000 or 10,000 words. He would cheerfully admit that the assignment had slipped his memory. The resultant rushed job might be nearly as badly typed as his letters. One or two of the pieces that came my way had clearly been written straight off, and mailed without correction. It might be necessary to strike out a paragraph which was more or less identical with a passage a few pages earlier. But when the tidying-up had been done the whole piece read remarkably well. I don't think there was any great gap between vintage and ordinary Brogan.

Perhaps this is to suggest that by temperament Denis Brogan was a journalist rather than an academic. He was learned but not bookish in the bad sense. He was inspired by deadlines, a consummate improviser. One gathers that he was not a good formal lecturer. But I once heard him give a sparkling performance when he was asked to fill in at ten minute's notice for a speaker at a conference who had not showed up. Physically and psychologically, it was as if he needed a pressure-chamber to match the surrounding atmosphere with his own appearance of near-explosive hypertension.

HE WAS an extraordinary man. Was he a great Americanist, genuinely on a par with Tocqueville and Bryce? I have been re-reading him in an attempt to answer that. It seems to me that he knew more about America than the other two—or than anyone of his day, European or American. His intelligence and intellectual vitality were outstanding. If he had cared to apply himself on the Tocquevillean scale—theorising, that is, instead of particularising—Denis Brogan could no doubt have produced distinguished work. But that is an iffy proposition. He wrote differently because he thought differently. Set against Bryce's *American Commonwealth*—a more relevant test—Brogan comes off handsomely. He was not only better informed than Bryce, he had more originality and more sympathetic insight. Test this assertion by measuring Bryce against Brogan's *American Character*, or any chapter from his political books. Or his comment, in a 1957 article, about the revival of religiosity in America:

> Even conventional adherence to a church, for highly unspiritual reasons, may have important and possibly good results. There is much wisdom in the saying of Elie Halévy that "many a man has become a good man as a result of a life of hypocrisy. . . ." More, the children of these conformist parents may "get" religion seriously and the need not to shock the children may strengthen the religious habits, as well as faith, of the parents. Belief is a form of habit.

Or his prophetic essay "The Illusion of American Omnipotence" (1952):

> I should . . . say that the illusion of omnipotence . . . is not shared by all Americans. . . . Nevertheless, the idea that I am trying to describe is expressed by Senators and columnists, by candidates, by preachers, by people overheard in taverns and club cars, in drugstores and restaurants—the idea that the whole world . . . can be moving in directions annoying or dangerous to the American people only because some elected or non-elected Americans are fools or knaves. When something goes wrong, "I wuz robbed" is the spontaneous comment—the American equivalent of that disastrous French cry, *"Nous sommes trahis."*

Or the piece on "The Presidency" written for ENCOUNTER (1964):

> The White House is a court because the President is a monarch. I used to be asked frequently during the last war by British officials posted to Washington what was the best book to describe the strange new world they were entering on. I didn't recommend Tocqueville or Bryce or even Brogan. I recommended Saint-Simon. I used to say, "You must remember you are going to a Court. You must abandon all your regular Whitehall ideas of official priorities and hierarchies. You cannot

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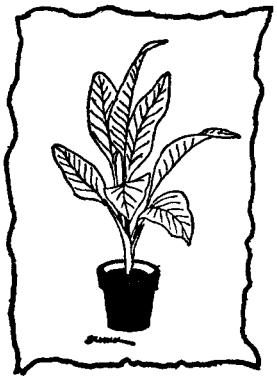
estimate the power of some people you will meet by their official title or by the quality of their carpet. You must watch out for those who have the ear of the President, the only ear that really counts."

Brogan abounds in such insights. They deserve to be recorded, or re-recorded, for posterity. He poured his gifts out prodigally, where scholars of less splendid talent chose to hoard and concentrate. He runs the risk of being given less than his due by the generation to come, because he gave his own era so much.

Marcus Cunliffe

On Middle-Class Values

Beyond Jeans & Avocado Pears—By GILLIAN TINDALL



WHAT, ACTUALLY, DOES "middle class" mean? It is a much-used word, but in employing it we become like Humpty-Dumpty: it not only means what we want it to mean, it can also mean two different and even opposite things on different days, or even in different sentences.

It ought at least, one feels, clutching vainly for facts amid the clinging, yielding webs of British class-consciousness, to have a definite meaning for historians and sociologists. I used to think that the term had only recently escaped from the bonds of precision, comforting myself with hazy images of Yeoman stock (or alternatively Mercantile Classes), all home-grown broadcloth, leather shoon and fat purses, unchanging for centuries, till it dawned on me that the one thing the student can safely mention in an historical essay covering almost any period is "the Rise of the Middle Classes." The fact is, from the Norman Conquest onwards, the middle classes always seem to have been rising more or less, like so much hot air. Yet the theory that there is something new and different about all these middle-class people bobs up again, as untarnished as ever, to enable sociologists to explain that our own times are unique, etc. etc. Though admittedly it has now been realised that the *term* middle class is a slippery one, statistically: in fact if you ask people, as one question on a survey about something else, what class they think they are, the great majority will say "Well, middle-class, I suppose", whether they're charge-hands or managing directors.

Yet at the same time the term doubles as a sneer-word. (Humpty-Dumpty himself, you may recall, was an accomplished sneerer.) Moreover you can use it to sneer not only upwards and downwards but also longways. You can sneer downwards, like a Nancy Mitford character, saying that girls' boarding schools are middle-class and so is putting the milk in first and so is saying "serviette", and this means *you* are upper-class. But there is also a well-established tradition of sneering at the middle classes solely on the grounds that they are *more* upper-class than you are, have posher houses, cleaner hands, decant the milk into a jug and don't belch at table. As for longways jibes, these are the ones aimed by wealthy young London couples who live in Camden Town at equally wealthy, if slightly older, couples who live in Putney, Chertsey, or Basingstoke. They have actually nothing whatever to do with class, being concerned solely with taste, like whether you prefer children in jeans or grey flannel shorts, whether you take your holiday in Leningrad or the Isle of Wight, and whether you like avocado pear and rare steak or well-done joint and sweet trifle. The jeans, Leningrad, and avocado pear brigade (to whom I belong and of whose little tricks I am therefore properly wary) like to believe that they are not only less "middle class" than their more cautious and traditionalist compatriots, but also—by a verbal sleight of hand substituting Conservative for conservative—more liberal, tolerant, broad-minded, enlightened, resourceful, brave, original and honest. In other words they use "middle-class" as a term of disapprobation as if it also

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implied, illiberal, narrow-minded, timid and hypocritical.

INDEED, IN THE LAST TEN YEARS "middle-class" has become contracted into an all-purpose epithet of Left Wing, or at any rate would-be Leftish invective. It is to the "classless", "enlightened" speaker (these adjectives are also his own) what "jewboy", "bounder", and indeed "Socialist" were to his Right-Wing grandfather—an automatic put-down. But should it really be accepted as such? What, actually, is being *said*, as distinct from emotively implied? Just as the best answer to the old-style Right-Wing charges was the retort "Yes, I am a Socialist, I also happen to be a Jew, and if being a bounder means having different manners from you then happily I am a bounder too"—so the best retort to the facile gibe "middle-class" is a brisk "Certainly I'm middle-class. Excellent thing to be. World couldn't do without us." The fact that this is so rarely said, even by people who patently represent a number of middle-class virtues as well as perhaps some of its vices, is a measure of the extent to which even those whose trade should have taught them better—journalists, telly pundits, sociologists—are mesmerised by words just as words. Instead of standing their ground they shuffle their feet and hurriedly attempt to convince a disbelieving world that *of course* they're not middle-class, with appropriate expressions of craven egalitarianism and anxious references to their deeply working-class immediate forbearers.

THIS SITUATION is all the more absurd in that, almost by definition, someone in a position to air his views publicly is more or less middle-class. Journalists and sociologists are not working-class, whatever their old dads may have been; nor are almost all of the people who write letters to the papers, organise pressure groups, volunteer to speak up for assorted minority groups. Almost inevitably the very qualities which have made you capable of speaking out have also meant that you no longer work in a menial or unskilled occupation. Even if you missed your footing on the ladder which leads the bright sons of labourers toward the white-collar (or white-overall) life, you are likely to have turned into a foreman, a self-employed man, or—that essential contradiction in terms as a representative of the working classes—a shop-steward. Even if, out of a romantic concept of class loyalty or a distaste for the "bourgeois way of life", you have resisted every chance for bettering yourself, clinging firmly to your accent, your Council flat in Limehouse, and your pick and shovel, such a distaste in itself indicates an independence of mind and a sophistication of concept which automatically sets you apart from your truly working-class mate. In this case, your recreations are apt to betray you. A man or

Middle-Class Revolt

IN PARLIAMENT TODAY: *Mr Michael Spicer (South Worcestershire, Con.) in a maiden speech, said the middle classes had been disillusioned, disabused, and undermined by events over the past 20 years. They were on the brink of revolt. They were outraged by current events. The immediate reason was the rate of inflation running at around 20 per cent a year.*

The middle classes could become the greatest adversary of democracy when whipped into fury either by national failure or by savage inflation. The middle classes, traditionally loyal and providing the dynamo of the country, were boiling over with anger and this explained the present electoral volatility.

Mr Hugh Fraser (Stafford and Stone, Con.) said they needed to get wealth into the country to sustain the standard of living. There were some Labour MPs who were slightly deranged on these matters. They were politically zenophobic and fiscally zero-philiac, which meant they hated foreigners and loved to achieve a loss. (Conservative laughter.)

THE TIMES

I BELIEVE *that what distinguishes the middle class is not income or possessions, but an attitude of mind. [Patrick Hutber writes]. On the whole, middle-class people save or try to save. The middle classes, if you like, are more reserved, they shelter behind their privet, but above all they postpone their satisfactions.*

They give up immediate consumption to gain a greater good later on, whether it is owning their own home, or schooling their children, or even, like Marcia Williams, trying to put something by for their old age.

Working-class life has many attractive features. At its best it is warm and outgoing and spontaneous: but the satisfactions are taken today.

These two great constituencies I am describing overlap with but do not coincide with the income groups of the Inland Revenue or the socio-economic classifications of the market researchers. Many "working-class" people are thriftier than many quick-spending quick-borrowing golf club types. Regardless of their income they are spiritually middle-class, whereas the spontaneous spenders have in whole or part adopted the ethos of the working class.

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

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THE DAYS OF THE BELOVED

Harriet Ronken Lynton
and Mohini Rajan

Mahbub, whose name means Beloved, ruled Hyderabad, largest of the Indian states, at the turn of the century. His was a feudal society with overtones of The Arabian Nights. From interviews with people old enough to remember it and from contemporary writings, the authors have evoked the spirit of that glittering era. In doing so they have revealed little-known aspects that have relevance to today's preoccupations: the accommodation with minorities, the scope of activities open to women (surprisingly broad for being locked in the zenana), the social organisation of men who were incapable of living within the prescribed sexual norms. Through sketches of people who constituted a cross-section of the society, the authors relate all actions to the individuals who performed them and thus exemplified their culture. In a final chapter they walk the reader through the changed scene of present-day Hyderabad.

Mrs Lynton lived for many years in Hyderabad, the residence of Mrs Rajan, whose forbears were part of Mahbub's city.

279 pages, £5.50

GALLIC SALT

Eighteen Fabliaux Translated from the Old French

Robert Harrison

The Old French fabliau is familiar to most students of medieval literature only through its descendants—Chaucer's "Miller's Tale" and "Reeve's Tale," for example, as well as several of the stories of the *Decameron*—but few persons other than specialists in Old French philology have ever actually seen a fabliau.

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ACCOMPLICES OF SILENCE

The Modern Japanese Novel

Masao Miyoshi

Until now no comprehensive critical discussion of the Japanese novel has been available in a Western language. In his intensive reading of several outstanding novels of the past hundred years, Mr Miyoshi explains that the Japanese novel, usually regarded as basically Western in style, retains native elements that utterly resist Western influence. Citing Western, especially English, novels for comparison, he demonstrates how the Japanese novel differs in important formal aspects. He relates such formal features of the novel as narrative situation, character, plot, and language to certain basic assumptions of Japanese culture.

The "accomplices of silence" are Futabatei Shimei, Mori Ōgai, Natsume Sōseki, Kawabata Yasunari, Dazai Osamu, and Mishima Yukio. All of the novels discussed are available in English, and although the book will interest the specialist, it is intended primarily for the general reader of novels.

189 pages, £4

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woman may do many things in principle, out of a Marxian sense of class solidarity (or a cloth-cap nostalgia), but even these die-hard refusers of personal development will not carry their renunciation so far as to divide their leisure time between Bingo, soft-core porn, and the betting shop. Instead, they are apt to become show-case niggers—"genuine working-class types"—in organisations essentially expressive of a middle-class determination to improve something, or everything. Their ethic, their very perception of the world around them, gives them away, even if other aspects of their way of life do not, in that the most distinctive and fundamental characteristic of a middle-class values system is the sheer possession of values—the concept of *getting-on*. Whether this is taken spiritually, intellectually or materially, it is logically hard to see how anybody who has in fact "got on" and made something of his life, in however discreet or unworldly a way, can claim to be entirely outside the middle classes. I am certainly middle-class—but so are you, or you wouldn't be reading ENCOUNTER.

IT THUS BECOMES EVIDENT that as a term of airy abuse "middle-class" will not do. It is apt to lead the speaker, punch-drunk with the irresistible game of looking down on others, into deeper water than he reckons. Being a trendy Hampstead parent teaching little Tabitha and Joshua to say "pee" and to despise those who "spend a penny" is one thing. But it becomes another when Tab and Josh, having learnt their lesson against the bourgeois cash nexus all too well, take to pinching books from shops ("striking a blow against Capitalism") and fail ignominiously to keep up with their trendy college courses because they've never actually learnt to work with an end in view. They may even have been encouraged to believe that all schools need to be changed because they "inculcate middle-class values." Of course schools do this—and cannot help but do it—because, in a most fundamental sense, education itself is a middle-class concept. If we really want to be that radical we should close all the schools and the children would go—where? Into street gangs? Back to the factories and mines? And if not, why not? Those to whom the phrase "de-schooling movement" is a new and attractive one to wield in discussions designed to display their "ruthless lack of respect for accepted values" might listen harder to what they themselves are actually saying and reflect on what "ruthless" and "radical" could really mean.

SUCH IS TODAY'S CLIMATE of nervous permissiveness (theoretical at any rate) that we have been conditioned into believing that "middle-class values" are pretty poor things to have. Are they really? And don't most people, even including the criminal and the determinedly "liberated", subscribe to at least some of them? Middle-class virtues, most people would agree, include a degree of restraint, a capacity to make provision in money or kind for the future, a respect for education, for the law, a concern for one's own property and a respect for other people's, politeness, a degree of mindless honesty, a tendency to abide by the social codes of one's own circle. . . . Some of these attributes are more generally admirable than others, some are less selfish than others; still, the proper way of estimating their worth is not to pick at their less lovely manifestations but to consider, in each case, what the *opposite* is like.

There may be no particular panache in working conscientiously at the same job for many years—nor is there any virtue as such in constantly changing jobs, in skiving at work or in never working at all. Revising for exams may not be glamorous and life-insurance policies are not glamorous either, but no one is likely to be still talking about your "splendid contempt for the trappings of bourgeois existence" when you are an old, unqualified, and destitute cadger. Unless, of course, you have some distinct talent, in which case you will have had to work at *that*: writers, painters, musicians, actors, and (I strongly suspect) gigolos and con-men do not carve out careers for themselves by being feckless and lazy—they work, albeit secretly, in the most persistent, calculated, middle-class way imaginable. So do Progressive school teachers. So do Trotskyite agitators. Ambition is still ambition, however eccentric its form. Indeed one might go as far as to say that an appearance of airy unconcern with the more obvious and easily-attainable symbols of success is *the* luxury of those who feel they are "Making It" in some other sphere.

PERSONALLY, I HAVE a weakness for bourgeois virtues, because often they seem to be rooted in an ethic of caring whereas their opposite frequently indicates, beneath its fun-surface, a daunting callousness and inconsistency. Un-chic as such an admission may seem, I like people who water their roses better than those who don't. I also prefer children who are taught to say "thanks" to those who shout "Piss off!" to the milkman as a daily joke. I am broadly in favour of the chicken-feeders and dog-walkers of this world, and I have a less than profound sympathy for those who desert their families. Mowing the lawn every Sunday and washing the car may, I admit, seem pretty footling occupations. But,

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contrary to the tenets of sentimental bohemianism, a weed-choked garden and a car dropping with rust do not prove you are a liberated spirit, it merely shows you are so over-privileged that you don't prize your property as much as you might if you had to struggle harder for it.

"Questioning the materialistic values of our Western Society" is a healthy exercise: but, like squash, long walks in the country, and organic food cults, it is essentially one that can only be indulged in by those who have already climbed, or been hauled, some considerable way up the ladder which leads from primitive survival at the bottom towards the peaks of affluent discontent. It is easy to have an enjoyable mock at the expendable top-dressings of bourgeois affluence—the car, the colour telly, the holiday in Spain—and to forget that the whole fabric of our civilisation is underpinned by a materialism of a more benign and realistic kind: that practicality which delivers the goods, more or less on time, in the quantity needed. A society in which butchers, bakers, and electricity-makers became imbued with a contempt for such middle-class devices as instructions, accepted procedures, and planning ahead, and sat around instead giggling over joints in the name of emancipation, would in a very short time be a hungry and chilly one. The idea of a world in which potential doctors and nurses developed too much scorn for middle-class ways to spend all those years training, in which no one wanted to be a qualified pharmacist any more, and even the men who put penicillin tablets into bottles had become too enlightened and unfettered to keep to their work schedule, should make us cringe in horror—if our imaginations were not softened and bloated by phoney concepts of "individual freedom."

THAT REJECTING BOURGEOIS SOCIETY is a conceit which can only be indulged in in a fundamentally orderly country such as our own—where there are plenty of other people prepared to provide a safety-net by doing all the unspectacular, inglorious jobs that keep everything running—ought to be too self-evident to need stating. Apparently, however, it is not, or the bogus Bohemianism of the Hippie-Student-Revolutionary culture could hardly have flourished over the last few years as it has. To proclaim yourself a "drop-out from society" argues a considerable lack of awareness of the true nature of the society of which you are inescapably a part. In another society, one without sewers, free schooling, the Health Service or Social Security, the same outward signs of rejection would carry a different meaning. In a peasant subsistence economy, to "drop out" is to risk true poverty—which means starvation,

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disease, and early death—not merely the artistic similacrum of these things through carefully unkempt hair or romantically shabby clothing.

"WHEN DANGER and pain press too near", wrote an 18th-century traveller, "they are merely terrible, but at a certain distance and with certain modifications they may be . . . delightful." He was describing landscape—the "rugged magnificence" then newly discovered as a pleasing contrast to increasingly enclosed and tamed plains. His words could be applied today to the fashionable cult of poverty, rusticity, and a degree of degradation. Fashion can be harmless, either in dress or in life-style—but it is perhaps desirable to recognise it for the games-playing it is. Under the faded, frayed jeans is a Playboy of the Western World so cushioned from real hardship that he can afford to scorn the clean white shirt of the Indian clerk. Behind the talk about "rejecting middle-class values" is an essentially soft and protected person living in a country where no one is actually allowed to starve or die of cholera. The alienated "radical revolutionary" is the ultimate product of a system that allows him the essentially middle-class luxury of intellectual abstraction. It is the historian's commonplace that almost everything that happens is achieved through the efforts of the middle classes. Including revolutions.

Knowledge versus Information

On the New "Propaedia"—*By* MAURICE CRANSTON

WHO SAID: "an Encyclopaedia is a book that nobody reads"? It has been true enough for a long time. An encyclopaedia is a book we simply use for looking up facts, an alphabetical storehouse of information. This was not at all the original idea. Whoever compiled the first encyclopaedia, the earliest one we know about was prepared by Plato's nephew, Speusippos, in 4th-century Athens; and although only fragments remain, it was clearly inspired by the idea of imparting knowledge and not merely recording information. The encyclopaedia was to give a systematic and structured account of all the various departments of learning. It was not idly to be read, still less to be consulted: it was to be read reflectively, even studied, as part of education and culture.

Since that time there have been two types of makers of encyclopaedias. There have been those who have followed in the footsteps of Speusippos, the philosophers, and there have been the journalists, who might fairly claim as their illustrious founder, Pliny, whose *Historia Naturalis* (*c.* A.D. 77) is essentially a book of reference, full of interesting facts. The word "encyclopaedia"—the "circle of learning"—ought strictly (according to its Greek origin) to be reserved for the enterprise of philosophers; but it is the journalists who have produced most of the books which bear that name, at any rate in modern times.

The philosophers still held the field in the Middle Ages. The *Speculum Maius* of Vincente de Beauvais (1190–1264) and the *Fons memorabilium universi* of Domenico Bandini (1335–1418) are good examples of the attempt to present human knowledge in a systematic ordered whole. There were many others, less well known, prompted by the same lofty aim. But, of course, such works could circulate only in manuscript, to be read, for the most part, by monks; and there was not all that vast amount of knowledge to record. Modernity brought in printing and a wider public, yet at first it was still the philosophers who seemed to predominate: we think of Bacon, Bayle, Diderot. But already in the case of Bacon—a man who devised a plan for an encyclopaedia without actually executing it—the philosopher takes on the new role of the ideologue. The Baconian encyclopaedia was conceived as an enterprise not to form the mind, but rather to reform, even perhaps to revolutionise the mind. The encyclopaedia was to be part of the armoury of science in the battle against metaphysics and religion; it was to be the compendium of new, or empirical, knowledge which the Baconians hoped to institute in place of imaginative, speculative, and traditional knowledge.

The encyclopaedia Bacon dreamed about, Diderot produced, in the thirty-five illustrated

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folio volumes of *L'Encyclopédie*: a magnificent achievement, especially in view of the censorship the hostility and the cheating Diderot had to endure. But if Bacon was more an ideologue than a philosopher, Diderot was as much a journalist as he was either ideologue or philosopher. His rather simplified form of Baconian empiricism diminished the distinction between information and knowledge. From Diderot's point of view the mastery of knowledge was largely a matter of accumulating facts: hence the emphasis on bulk—the more facts you learned, the more you knew. The aim of his encyclopaedia was to set down the findings of the sciences. As for the order of that setting down, Diderot did not hesitate to choose that of a dictionary: the subtitle of his work was *Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers.*

He had to hand the model of Pierre Bayle, whose *Dictionnaire historique et critique* was Baconian in the negative sense of undermining traditional opinions and to that extent congenial to Diderot. Bayle produced a dictionary of ideas, structured like a dictionary of words. Its chief defect from Diderot's point of view was that it was too short and too limited in its range of subjects. A second, and more important, model was Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopaedia, or a universal dictionary of arts and sciences*, published in London in two folio volumes in 1728. This was a work of journalism; and it sold so well that the French publisher, Le Breton, bought up the French rights. Diderot was engaged, in the first place, simply to translate, edit, and enlarge Chambers.

THE GREAT *Encyclopédie* in this way sprang from the English journalist's model; and its very success fixed in most people's minds the new conception of an encyclopaedia as an alphabetical dictionary of facts. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, of which the first part appeared in Edinburgh in 1768, perpetuated this belief. For this very first *Britannica* was, like Chambers, the work of journalists. Its founders (Bell, MacFarquhar, and Smellie) were none of them philosophers. They had not even, like Diderot and Bayle, any ideological aims. The subtitle of their new encyclopaedia was again "a dictionary of arts and sciences": and the only order in what they printed was alphabetical order.

Their work was a success; and any subsequent edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* up to the fifteenth, which has come out this year,[1] has enlarged the range and influence of this massive

[1] *The Encyclopaedia Britannica.* Fifteenth Edition. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., Chicago and London, 1974.

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enterprise. The new edition has, however, a wholly different character from all the others. It looks different, and is different, from every one of the preceding fourteen. The explanation is a simple one: it has been put together by a philosopher. The names of the publisher, the late Senator William Benton, of the Chairman of the board of editors, Mr Robert M. Hutchins, and of the editor-in-chief, Mr Warren E. Preece, appear prominently on the title pages; beside them is a fourth name, one described as director of planning—and this is none other than Professor Mortimer Adler, the director of the Institute of Philosophical Research at Chicago. There is abundant evidence that Professor Adler is behind the complete remodelling of the new *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Anyone who knows his books on ethics and the philosophy of law will recognise his concern for form, structure, and system behind this new attempt to banish the journalist's conception of an encyclopaedia as a dictionary and to reinstate the classical idea of the "circle-of-learning."

IT IS IRONICAL TO RECALL that one of the first and least commercially successful efforts to produce a competitor to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* was inspired by a philosopher. In the early 19th century, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was invited to plan and edit the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*. His association with the publication was short-lived, and the encyclopaedia dragged on for years without achieving completion; but at least Coleridge contributed an introductory essay on the nature and purposes of an encyclopaedia, as something wholly distinct from an alphabetical dictionary of facts. Coleridge put the greatest emphasis on method:

> "All things, in us, and about us, are a chaos without method: and as long as the mind is entirely passive, so long as there is an habitual submission of the understanding to these events and images, as such, without any attempt to clarify and arrange them, so long the chaos must continue."

The method Coleridge recommended he described as a "way" or "path", a progressive transition through "the whole circle of art and science"; and he described his goal as education, in a sense of education that he ascribed to Plato. "Plato", he wrote, "desired not to assist in storing the passive mind with the various sorts of knowledge most in request, as if the human soul were a mere repository or banqueting room, but to place it in such relations of circumstance as . . . to produce new fruits of thought."

Professor Adler in his preface to the new *Britannica* says many things that Coleridge might have said: but he takes more seriously than Coleridge the idea of a "circle" of knowledge which the word "encyclopedia" invokes. Coleridge clearly did not think the "circle" was more than a metaphor. He set out the various branches of learning in a distinctly hierarchical or pyramid-like form. For him the practical was subordinate to the theoretical, the arts and sciences were subordinate to philosophy, and philosophy subordinate to morals and religion. This last was of some importance to Coleridge, since he saw one objective, among others, of his *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana* as countering the positivist ideology of Diderot's *Encyclopédie*. As against the "exploded doctrine of perfectibility" Coleridge wanted to promote "a permanent revolution in the moral world . . . guided by the historic sense."

Professor Adler makes much of the circle of learning precisely because it enables him to discard the necessity of a hierarchy of the arts and sciences. He divides the fields which are covered by this encyclopaedia into ten segments, each able to claim no more importance or greater centrality than any of the others. "A circle", writes Professor Adler, "is a figure in which no point on the circumference is a beginning, none is a middle, none is an end. It is also a figure in which one can go from any point in either direction. . . ." He goes on to explain that whereas all previous fourteen editions of the Britannica have been compiled on the basis of classified lists of articles, the new edition had been planned "in the light of an orderly topical outline of the whole of human knowledge in the form of the circle of learning." What this amounts to in concrete terms is that the thirty volumes of the *Britannica* are divided into three sections. The first ten volumes, called the *micropaedia*, serve the purposes of the journalist's encyclopaedia as a book of reference. There are rather more than a hundred thousand entries, none of more than 750 words, arranged from *A* to *Z*. Here there is no order at all except the fortuitous succession of letters. No doubt the public will be grateful for it. Even Coleridge, who despised the alphabetical sequence more intensely than anyone, wrote in the preface to his own encyclopaedia:

> "Well aware that all works of this nature are not solely useful to those who have leisure and inclination to study science in its comprehensiveness and unity, but are also valuable for reference on particular points . . . we could not hold ourselves dispensed from consulting the convenience of a numerous and most respectable class of Readers."

The *micropaedia* of the new *Britannica* does just this. The originality of the new *Britannica* is to be found in the next twenty volumes; in the two parts which are called the *propaedia* and the *macropaedia*. It is here that Professor Adler seems to have succeeded where Coleridge failed in imposing what Coleridge called "the philo-

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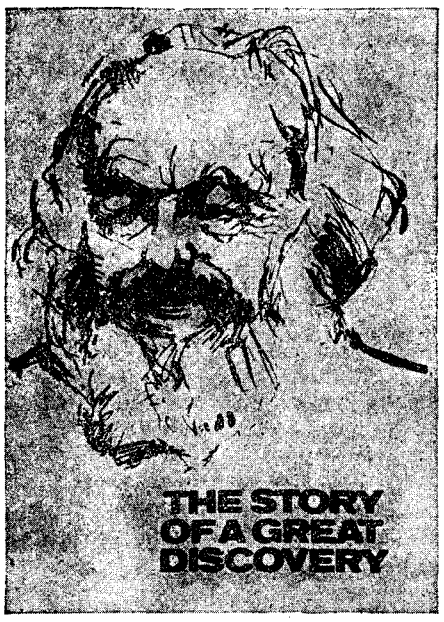
sophical arrangement" on the greater part of his encyclopaedia. In the *macropaedia* there are 22,000 pages but only a little more than four thousand articles. Some entries are as long as an average book; all are studies in depth of the subject treated; and all are exercises in *haute vulgarisation* in which the specialist knowledge of experts is made intelligible to laymen, with the aid of good pictures and diagrams as well as words.

The design of the *macropaedia* is set out schematically in the *propaedia*, and this part of the encyclopaedia serves as a guide to the contents. It is here that Professor Adler develops his idea of drawing the "circle of learning" as a chart of human knowledge, divided into segments, sections and subdivisions, each logically related to its neighbour, and through its neighbours to all the other disciplines represented within the circle. The pedagogic value of this arrangement cannot well be disputed. If one happens to start out with an interest, for example, in jurisprudence, one has only to look from segment V, entitled "Human Society", to the fifth subdivision and there it is all set out under "Western and non-Western philosophers of law" with copious references to all the various articles in the *macropaedia* which touch upon the problems of legal theory and the history of legal theories; on either side of this section are set out the relevant sources for the study of other fields of law, international law lying immediately to the one side, public municipal law to the other. Thus any reader who happened to be interested in jurisprudence could begin to acquire a systematic understanding of both legal thought and legal institutions, which is something no one could do from the journalist's encyclopaedia, which leaves the reader floundering among unconnected entries, picking up here and there fragments which could never be put together to make a whole, if even all were found. What could be done with the new *Britannica* to satisfy an interest in jurisprudence could equally be done to satisfy any other interest: using the *propaedia* is no more difficult than using a really good bibliography.

To those of us who work in universities and can read the signs of these melancholy times (the lights going out, the enrolments diminishing, the budgets cut, the appointments frozen) it begins to look as if the only future for education is for self-education. The autodidact, the Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Jude the Obscure may well soon be the only young men with any intellectual culture. If they can afford it, the fifteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, with Professor Adler's *propaedia*, will not serve them badly.



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Adverbial Flushes

Ricks on Keats—By PETER CONRAD

CRITICISM OF KEATS has become in recent years a matter of rhapsodic name-calling: we celebrate him with expletives. John Bayley first hailed his vulgarity; now Christopher Ricks[1] rejoices in finding him embarrassing.

In a British Academy lecture in 1962 Mr Bayley exposed the shifty misgivings of our attitude to Keats, and established the alternative view of which Mr Ricks's book is the latest exposition. Keats embarrassed the 19th century. Byron recoiled from Keats's vulnerability, his self-soliciting intimacy, into the protection of an attitude; the other romantic poets, unlike Keats, are sealed inside a view of things, an egotism which insulates and excludes—Wordsworth's rocky gravity, Shelley's airiness, Byron's cool connoisseurship are all ways of detachment. Romantic poetry, far from being lyrically confessional, recollects emotion through the tranquillising medium of an idea, an interpretation. But because Keats could not make his faltering design upon reality work, because he is a poet of appetite and glad spontaneous sensation—whereas Wordsworth deals with sensation two or three times refracted and recalled, Shelley glances away from sensation into a shadow-play of disembodied images, and Byron stylises sensation, adding each experience to his collection like Don Giovanni lengthening his list—because of this singularity, he was a problem from the first. The 19th-century way of dealing with him was to apologise for the early verse as wild oats, and to see Keats struggling out of it into something finer and nobler—like Verdi's consumptive Violetta growing from the giddy coloratura of hedonism into the heroic wisdom of renunciation. De Quincey[2] called *Endymion* an edifice of "wax-work filigree or gilt gingerbread", a folly of glutinousness, but thought the *Hyperion* pieces had "the majesty, the austere beauty, and the simplicity of a Grecian temple enriched with Grecian sculpture"; Arnold rejoiced to see the pulp of the first hardening into the flint of the second. This Victorian moral disquiet is covertly present in much modern criticism of Keats, which stiffens him into a poet of intellectual ingenuity and plunders the letters for intimations of ideas. Embarrassed, perhaps, by the blitheness of the assertion that beauty is all we need to know, Cleanth Brooks attempted to pass this off as the personal opinion of the urn, turning Keats into a Jamesian formalist whose urn is as problematically well-wrought as the golden bowl. Keats has often been presented as a philosopher, and even, in a recently published Princeton thesis, becomes a research chemist, describing in his poetry the distillations and essences and ether he learnt about at Guy's Hospital from William Babington and Alexander Marcet.

ALL THIS JOHN BAYLEY disposed of (although the news seems not to have reached Princeton): the classical fragments he saw as a desperate sacrifice of Keats's gift for the "unmisgiving", an attempt to turn breathless sensation into something elevated and stern. The trembling knee and idly caressing tongue of Niobe in *Endymion* yield to the wan, blanched face of Moneta in *The Fall of Hyperion*, bled of life, blushful vitality drained into the lily and the snow. But in straining for tragedy Keats could only advance from pleasant sensation to unpleasant, "savour of poisonous brass and metal sick" which assault the palate—Shakespearean tragedy is just as much a fruit as Spenserian romance; the only difference Keats finds is in the bitter-sweetness of the flavour. *The Cap and Bells* is a sad accompaniment to the classical poems, for it makes jingling fun of the benign influence of Leigh Hunt whereas they deaden it into marble. The 19th-century wisdom about Keats was that he would have become a

[1] *Keats and Embarrassment*. By CHRISTOPHER RICKS. Oxford University Press, £3.75.

[2] *De Quincey as Critic*. Edited by JOHN E. JORDAN. Routledge, £7.50. The same editor has overseen the reprint of Edward Sackville West's valuable if belle-lettrish study of de Quincey, *A Flame in Sunlight*, Bodley Head, £4.

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sage if only he had been given time; Mr Bayley, however, implied that he died just in time, as his gift was being destroyed by the effort to mature it.

Although Mr Ricks begins by differentiating his approach from Mr Bayley's—fixing rather unfairly on a stray remark about the embarrassing—his book is a descendant of that British Academy lecture. The true difference is that Mr Bayley's Keats disconcerted, whereas Mr Ricks's embarrasses. The former quality corresponds to Mr Bayley's particular instinct for separating the true—in this case the vulgar—from the false, art which is unselfconsciously free from art which is studied and meticulous; the latter quality corresponds to Mr Ricks's own gift for disentangling the muddled complexities of poetic images and social situations. Mr Bayley's praise of the disconcerting connects with his enthusiasm for what Pushkin called the compromising—art which in its diversity can contradict itself, not ruled by a conception; Mr Ricks's praise of the embarrassing connects with his trick of startling the meaning out of a poetic text by an abrupt transition from art to life, embarrassing his audience (this book began as a course of lectures, and we seem to hear and watch Mr Ricks whereas we read or overhear Mr Bayley) into agreement with him. Both are virtuoso critics but of very different kinds, Mr Bayley effacing himself in an infinitely deft and intricate exploration of the works (it is characteristic that he should have decided against calling his lecture, as he originally intended, "Keats and Vulgarity"), Mr Ricks rather more sensationally employing the works as part of a critical adventure which extends beyond them to social life and very definitely includes the critic.

EMBARRASSMENT IS central to Mr Ricks's technique because as a performer he needs to overcome and negotiate it: he is an extrovert critic, as Mr Bayley is secretive and introverted, and much depends on making his spectators accept personal remarks without mutual embarrassment, convincing them that while being outrageous he is still illuminating Keats. Quoting Lionel Trilling's amusing elaboration of Auden's remark that a good book reads us, he adds ruefully, "This is wittier than I could do"; but the falsely modest grimace introduces a passage revealing how Trilling is himself embarrassed by the embarrassingness of modern literature which is at least equally witty. The triumph is both underlined and tactfully minimised by the initial disclaimer.

Mr Ricks works perilously close to the point at which the audience might call his bluff, but saves himself by anticipating its interventions: he covers the uncharacteristic bathos of his reading of the rosy hue in the autumn poem as "Keats's greatest blush" by disarming criticism in advance—"it may be argued that I am imagining a blush." The point is won by the sly, delightful joke—the critic is momentarily like a rampant adolescent in a novel, seeing blushes everywhere—rather than proved by the series of parallels from *Endymion* which follows. The same sleight of hand is practised at the beginning of the discussion of "To Autumn": it is a great poem, Mr Ricks says, "and in suggesting that the poem suits my book, I am not saying that it is great because it suits my book"—and yet this is precisely what he does seem to be saying, for he goes on first to be judicious in an unaccustomed orotund tone ("I concur with those who find this markedly the greatest of Keats's odes") and then nimbly to return, under cover of this Johnsonian consensus, to the point he had earlier disavowed ("*there is no coincidence*"—my italics—"in its being also the one which most naturally, subtly, and unmisgivingly accommodates the ambivalence of feeling which I consider characteristic of Keats's truest imagination"): the hand is won with an adverbial flush. Criticism for Mr Ricks is a game of skill, but the cards are at times shuffled and dealt and disposed of a little too dazzlingly.

THROUGHOUT THE BOOK Mr Ricks places his interpretation of Keats as a poet of tact, uniquely sure-fingered in his apprehension and exploration of embarrassment, in the context of a discussion of embarrassment in life, and it is this double concern with which I feel uneasy. The literary part of the book is expert: in particular it contains the first account I know of Keats's letters as literature, rather than philosophical jottings, and their very inconsistency, their Sternean leaps of association from metaphysics to gossip, is charted to show the writer's progress through embarrassment to truth and intimacy. Mr Ricks is also an outstanding analyst of poetic effects: he describes a sentence in "To Autumn" which "swells and buds and runs around the stanza's eaves." Oxymoron, the intertwining of contradictory senses, stimulates some of his finest perceptions—and they are snailhorn insights, truly Keatsian: in the "slumbery pout" of Adonis for instance (although here Mr Ricks's adverb is rather lush) the motivation implied by "pout" is rescinded by the adjective, which has the effect of "ripely cancelling that in advance without striking it from the record"; or Madeline undressing hidden in the clothes she sheds "like a mermaid in sea-weed"—sea-weed is right because "it is both fascinating in its tactile pungent oddity and yet faintly repellent."

Inevitably there is a distance between the images and the technical language of their

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analysis—John Bayley writing in ENCOUNTER in July 1973 about Mr Ricks's *Tennyson* said "there are moments when we have the impression of an elderly patient being tapped and stretched for the benefit of the students by an omniscient consultant." In this book, however, the patient is not acquiescently elderly and lethargic but eager, panting, youthfully blushful and palpitant, and the ambience is not that of Rembrandt's anatomy lesson, but that of the sex-research laboratory of Drs Masters and Johnson, who rigged up an elaborate electrocardiogramic and photographic apparatus to record the manual, mechanical, supine and knee-chest manoeuvres of their enthusiastic volunteers. Like Masters and Johnson soberly computing "the maximum physiological intensity of orgasmic response subjectively reported or objectively recorded", Mr Ricks turns Keats's rosy-hued flushes into a "vital turgescence" which "phallicizes the face", and he quotes a psychoanalyst who—this *is* embarrassing in its juxtaposition of textures—equates as erectile tissues the penis and the neck of a turkey.

Too sensitive to language not to feel the disparity between lyricism and the grim therapeutic jargon of medicine, Mr Ricks admits that one quoted section on the taboos attaching to public eating, excretion and coition is "remote in tone but not in substance" from Keats—but need Keatsian eating be discussed in this professional way? His is a poetic and not an anthropological appetite—proving a thing on the pulses means proving it on his taste-buds; a thing is not real for him unless he can get it into his mouth. Eating is a metaphor both of creativity, as it savours, absorbs, engorges experience, and of sex: the consummation between Madeline and Porphyro is a banquet of sense, a table laden with candied fruits, syrups, dates, jellies and dainties; but these connections are not explained by recourse to Havelock Ellis on the means of subsistence and Malinowski on the absence of commensalism among savages. The jolt from poetry to science occurs often, threatening to turn the essay into a case-book of scopophilia, enuresis, onanism, neurasthesia and erythrophobia; Keats is strung up in a network of wires which excite dials in the control-room, and his sensations become symptoms. At other times the versatile critic assumes the tone of the Spockian model parent—art's capacity to extend sympathies is commensurate with "the trust in bringing children up with love and with respect"; or Mr Ricks lingers over the dimples and soft gums of babies, "at once sweetly delightful and disconcerting in their pink wet physicality and toothlessness," and writes about why it is "so lovely to watch your baby or child sleeping." Elsewhere, the case-book might be Carnegie's rather than Spock's, as his discussion of tact leads Mr Ricks to muse on the right ways to leave a room, or apologise to a correspondent one has neglected: Keats becomes a model of conduct, of service to us "with regard to all such embarrassments as might otherwise make us shrink, or blush, or be glassy."

KEATS IS ELSEWHERE SUBJECTED to the indignity of sociology, and the authority here is Erving Goffman, who in a fashion quite inconsistent with the unmisgiving instinctive rightness of Keats's behaviour has created a chilling fiction of social life which turns us all into inauthentic actors, our responses conditioned, guarded, self-assertive, every social situation a war game: relationships become interactions of static bodies mechanically protecting their identities, individuals are not real unless they feel themselves to be cutting figures before others. Goffman's science fiction, a society of reactions automatically triggered, of motorised emotions, seems the more out of place because it makes a grotesque contrast with the imaginative delicacy of Mr Ricks's own analysis of Keats's practical joking—although it also entices him into speculation of a frankly ludicrous kind, as when he suggests that Keats chose to be a writer because it was a vocation which made his small stature invisible. The appeal of this panoply of anthropology, sociology and psychology may lie in its explanatory glibness—these sciences provide a reason for everything, and they do so automatically: people become machines made in a certain way whose fidgetings and cravings and pretences to free will can be studied and altered under experimental conditions. This is the attractive but demeaning fantasy with which they beguile the literary critic, who also needs explanations and may be tempted to derive them not from individual insights but from scientific generalising. Mr Ricks insists rightly that watching is a central experience in Keats's poetry, but he is himself perhaps too fond of scrutiny, of a mesmeric gaze which catches the poetry out when it is without defences, and translates the unwitting, slumbery Adonis into the quite different world where it is improper to watch someone sleeping in a train.

Another quoted source which muddies the sense of the argument is Sartre's opaque prose-poem from *Being and Nothingness* on the leech-like docility of slime, an allegorisation of that substance as "the revenge of the In-itself", three pages of sticky ghastliness clogged with honey sliding off a spoon, a woman's breasts flattening, moist feminine sucking, indelible sugariness, and a wasp drowning in jam: a montage of conceits which is the agony of language, as slime is "the agony of water." But urged on by this "best

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criticism of Keats ever written not about him", Mr Ricks soaks himself in "the richly nutritious peaceful simplicity of honey," treacle and ooze, the sluicy and the spongy, saliva and sea-weed, Bob Dylan's "Her mouth was watery and wet"; the prose seems positively oleaginous, a swamp of mawkishness.

If the sections in thrall to science are too remote from Keats's personal tone, these passages on the contrary do not keep their distance: speculating about freckles or nostrils, which "like all the body's orifices . . . has the potentiality for distaste and awe", Mr Ricks recreates the Keatsian effect of fascinated repulsion, out-embarrassing his mentor. He has as well, a Keatsian fondness for ravenous compound phrases whose affection tends to patronise its object, and for doting doublets—"appalling and appalled", "diffused and defused", "the best of friends, with the best of friends", "an encompassing directness with a directness which is indeflectible", "one of the objections to singularity is its singleness." Like Leigh Hunt, he riots in -nesses, plural suffixes which squeeze the greatest possible pleasure from key words: "suggestivenesses" or "drunkennesses." Favourite adjectives chuck their nouns under the chin—"dear dryness", "rich commonplaceness"—or else purringly admonish, as when a remark of John Jones's is found to be "richly incomplete."

PROSE WHICH GUSHES, which fairly salivates over its object, is an occupational hazard: Mr Ricks is a subtle explicator, but he was perhaps more at his ease with Milton and Tennyson—the one a poet who strangely sets language free by locking it in a syntactic strait-jacket, the other a poet of "poised and stationary style" as Henry James put it. Both are classical stylists whose techniques invite connoisseurship, a studious, finished response which in Keats's case is not possible. He invites lip-licking delight, an orgy of gustativeness, which upsets the demonstrative precision of Mr Ricks's prose. It is revealing that though Byron is the anti-hero of the book—too much the lord and master of his face to blush, flippantly deriding Keats as a self-frigger and a piss-a-bed—Mr Ricks's discussion of him is startlingly better than much of that of Keats, because Byron's style, "a *cordon sanitaire* against contagious embarrassment", demands to be approached from the cool outside, not from the warm, dark, fetid inside, like Keats's.

SHELLEY IS A bodiless poet, an Ariel inhabiting a dim landscape of thought, and in Wordsworth bodies fossilise, returning to the stern substantiality of rocks and stones and trees—

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of the romantic quartet, Byron and Keats are the poets of the body and its comedy. Byron's is the satiric carcase of the 18th century, lumbering, damaged, inappropriately yoking together sense and spirit, anxious to get out of its sand-pit; the limping gait of the Spenserian stanza in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* or the athleticism of the verse in *Don Juan* both suggest physical activity, as if Byron is provoking that body we drag along so ludicrously after us into free, delighted motion. Physical limitation is exhilaratingly overcome, as ballet turns our leaden plodding along the ground into flight, or opera speech into song. For Keats the body is not an impediment—he is inside it, but not as a prisoner; he feels most alive when enjoying the shocks of vulnerability which course through the body, as when he is overcome by hot flushes as he looks at a lock of Milton's hair—poetic ambition urges him out of the body into Miltonic flight, but at the last he settles back into its comfortable, limited warmth.

Keats feels about himself as Shakespearean characters do—for Shakespeare and for Dickens, the body is the vehicle of character: Falstaff monstrously filling out his vast kingdom of flesh and irrigating it with sherris, Cleopatra absorbing even the asp into a maternal embrace, Mr Pecksniff moistening with meekness, Silas Wegg threatening to grow a second wooden leg. The pleasures of embarrassment are a record of this comedy of the physical from within; it is Keats's sympathetic intimacy of sense which prevents him from becoming a dramatic poet, fleshing out, as Shakespeare and Dickens do, physical forms utterly unlike his own. Character quite soon after Keats separates itself from its physical embodiment—the mind, as one of Oscar Wilde's wits puts it, is triumphant over both matter and morals; the mind, a luminous halo, angelically lucid and untrammelled by the physical, expels the body from the novel—it needs no sustenance, and Virginia Woolf's Boeuf-en-Daube is, in comparison with the feasts of Keats and Dickens, as abstract and un-nutritious as Mr Ramsay's table when you are not there.

MR RICKS INTERESTINGLY SETS himself against the characterisation of Keats as a pictorial poet, though his reasoning here seems tricky. He argues that the other arts lack literature's invigorating power to embarrass: words can play with feelings about the things they refer to, but paint is subserviently representative, incapable of coyly cancelling itself with hinting negatives or oxy-morons, as Keats has language do. A nipple in Keats arouses mixed feelings because it is spoken of, but the nipple of Venus which Cupid tweaks in Bronzino's allegory is merely shown. I think this is to do less than justice to the picture (which is in any case—its cold pose enamelling sex into an intellectual diagram—as far as possible from Keats: it is about the fretful misgivings of sex). Paint can comment as well as language can, and it does so here in the metallic pallor of the colouring which bleeds the flirtation of passion (this is not an embrace; utterly without concern for the other, Venus and Cupid might be professionally assuming their roles for a pornographer's camera), and in the formal contrast between their posed stationariness and the violent energy of the surrounding figures, or the tactile contrast between their gleaming bloodless flesh, a cold silver, and the blue drapery, the red cushions, the scales of the griffon's tail or the greenish hue of Jealousy. Sex and its discontents are fully dramatised here, in the combination of prurience and aesthetic chill with which the paint is applied, and this is why Iris Murdoch could use it as the centre-piece of *The Nice and the Good.*

Bacchus making "Ariadne's cheek look blushingly" is also, Mr Ricks thinks, a different thing from Titian's picture of the incident. Titian's Ariadne simply flushes; Keats's is characterised, motivated, both desired and desiring. Again he is wonderfully subtle about the poem, but imperceptive about the painting—colour and gesture characterise Titian's Ariadne, and there is a Keatsian ambiguity in her recoil, which swivels away from Bacchus but has the inviting effect, despite itself, of completing the great cyclonic gesture with which he sweeps out of the chariot; he is about to pounce on her, and she awaits him, at bay, timorous but prepared, a still figure as he is a whirling, mobile one. The very composition pursues her, driving her into a corner against the sea and sky whereas Bacchus and his revelling entourage emerge from the density and darkness of the forest. Her intention is to flee, and her body turns away, but she cannot resist a backward glance, and this discloses the embarrassed flush. Her arm points upwards, like Titian's figure of sacred love (or Dickens's Agnes), but the glow on her face contradicts it. Titian's picture is as suggestive as Keats's vignette. Paint is after all blushful: colour is the pulse of spontaneous emotion, which the rigours of line struggle to control—Whistler said drawing must be a firm lord and master to its wife, colour, which might otherwise become "a jaunty whore", rioting into "a chaos of drunkenness, trickery, regrets and incompleteness."

Music is also rather dismissively treated, as Mr Ricks cannot imagine how it "as an art could make use of embarrassment"—yet it surely does so in Haydn's noisy surprise, or the fearful intimacy of the prelude to *Tristan* and the calamitous deflation when the love-duet is interrupted,

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or in the parodies with which 20th-century music is riddled. It is because music envelops us so completely that it is hedged about with embarrassment, demanding that we overcome our self conscious reticence. What John Cage creates for his audience is not embarrassment, as Mr Ricks calls it, but either boredom or smug knowingness; contemporary art bewilders or bluffs it, but that is not the same searching, disarming thing as embarrassment.

In asides like these on painting and music, the book's very amplitude works against it: its vast scheme seems too personal, too dependent on urgent appeals to the audience's assent; it is as if Mr Ricks is no longer satisfied by the critic's servile role, and in seeking to extend the field of discussion he is building a stage for himself. Strangely compounding self-analysis, science and love-song—Keats hovers over the final sentence like one of the secular saints of Arnold's Rugby Chapel or George Eliot's choir invisible, blushfully "of service to us too in matters of knowledge and taste"—*Keats and Embarrassment* is not so much criticism as critical theatre.

Changing the Avant-Garde

The Black Mountain Idiom—by ALAN BROWNJOHN

ANY GOOD, STABLE and productive relationship is usually also—needs to be—reciprocal, trusting and (ultimately) a matter of accepting, and learning from, differences. The relationship between English and American poetry during the last decade has become needlessly complex and fraught, even occasionally embittered, because the dialogue has been increasingly conducted in terms of the differences alone. Whereas, once, the English poet could contemplate with an entirely calm interest the modern American tradition—the various traditions—and what he could derive from it, he now feels he has to take a stand. The chronology and character of the change, which has been a change to a situation of fruitless tension between the two cultures (and, especially fruitless for the English poet, of tension within his own culture) might be worth tracing.

The first inklings of an alternative poetry, a mode different from the established style on both sides of the Atlantic coincided, for those in the know in England, with the late days, the post-1950 dawn or decay (whichever you prefer to think), of Black Mountain College. To be "in the know" you needed to be not only taking your American poetry from the *Oxford Book of Modern American Verse* and *Poetry* (Chicago) but plugged in to the little magazine and small press circuit. If you ran a magazine little enough, and were listed in directories of small literary publications, the manuscripts—and the exchange copies of other magazines—poured in. As early as 1951 or 1952 it was clear to just a few people in England that a narrow, yet intensely defiant, current of experimentalism ran beneath the relatively orthodox surface of American poetry.

The supremacy of the orthodoxy which broadly grouped together some very dissimilar, major figures—Frost, Marianne Moore, Roethke, Jarrell, Lowell, Wilbur (poets whom a lot of people in England had read)—was under challenge from a doctrine which offered in its support the utterly different work of several names of which hardly anyone had even heard: Charles Olson, Cid Corman, Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan. Through tiny English magazines (usually published far from the metropolis), through the ceaseless advocacy of a small number of poets and editors who crossed the Atlantic (in both directions), with the arrival of the Beats in the late 1950s, this counter-orthodoxy gradually set itself up as an opposition to our own establishment. Tributaries fed into it: the counter-orthodoxy in England now is a large, loose coalition which embraces certain of the Poundians, adherents of Black Mountain, some English Beats, numerous surrealists, a few grass-roots regionalists, pop and protest poets of various shades, concrete poets. Almost an establishment in itself, its primary (though not its only) loyalty is to American forbears working in a culture and an idiom with which the English have to struggle to make an affinity. The tendency of the "English" English and the "American" English to write each other off as irrelevant to what is *really* going on is the source of most of the current conflict between English and American poetry. A situation in which

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everyone could learn has become one in which two broad parties are mutually derogatory and suspicious.

MARTIN DUBERMAN'S absorbing book on the successive stages in the tragi-comedy of Black Mountain College, North Carolina[1] charts fully, for the first time, the way in which an experimental college community founded in 1933 came in its late years—the years of its decline as a college and its collapse as a community—to be first, the centre of many sorts of experimental creative endeavour, and then the fount of new literary doctrines propounded ceaselessly by Charles Olson; the place from which the new American poetry of the early 1950s radiated out, through the little magazines, in ripples which continue to reach our own shores two decades later. But the book is also something more, much more: a study, in patient and enthralled detail, of how a pioneer venture came to grief. Mr Duberman is illuminating on the way in which, with the celebrities of the *avant-garde*—Buckminster Fuller, Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg, Creeley and, above all, Olson—moving in, Black Mountain ceased to be a formal community and turned into "an informal learning environment." What this meant in plain terms, was that the academic staff which made it a college drifted away in despair, the students ceased to enrol, the funds (as they were always about to do) finally and irrecoverably ran out, and the sewage filled the lake. Black Mountain was owned by its teachers, its faculty. In winter 1956, Olson, the last college Rector, is left in sole residence, and is saying, about the future of the college, that "if some people wanted to come down, fine, and if not, that was fine too." People did not come down, the site and buildings were sold up, and the library left by Black Mountain's founder, John Andrew Rice, was disposed of by Olson without reference to its owner. Mr Duberman, nothing if not honest, in a disconcertingly self-scrutinising way, about the facts, and his personal methods and motives for recording them, leaves an impression of his own uncertainty about these last days, when Black Mountain was at its most influential and its most hideously messy; as well he might. Few of the principals in the story emerge very attractively. The famous climax of Black Mountain in the Olson years may or may not be a notable *avant-garde* renaissance; it was undoubtedly a sordid end to an honourable venture of another kind. It deserves a digression.

[1] *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community.* By MARTIN DUBERMAN. Wildwood House, £4.75.

The greater part of Mr Duberman's book is concerned with Black Mountain's earlier ideals, achievements and failures as a "free" educational community. At his disposal he had what must surely be an archive of unequalled fullness recording the day-to-day life of the college; and the willingness of scores of former staff and students to express themselves endlessly and without inhibition about their experience of the place. As a document of social psychology, of group dynamics in a small and struggling community, it is continually fascinating, and to read of the aspirations and travails of Black Mountain in the 1930s is to understand more the dilemmas and conflicts, the political and personality tensions, inside some institutions of higher education today. The commune that begins with rapturous singleness of purpose and ends in squabbling disarray; the apparatus of self-government which is abused and manipulated by the ambitious or the assertive; the freedom to criticise which becomes the licence to assassinate personalities—Black Mountain College provided the lot, crazily ahead of its time in all this as in so much else.

THE COLLEGE was founded in 1933 by John Andrew Rice, a classics teacher whose irregular personal behaviour and unorthodox classes—ditching the syllabus, letting discussion develop just as he or his students (more often Rice) felt like *letting* it develop—earned him his dismissal from the staid Rollins College. Black Mountain, staffed by Rice, a handful of other Rollins dissidents, and some distinguished and creative teachers from both the United States and Europe, was to be at once free and self-determining, and rigorously communal. The faculty would own it, and would take decisions by consensus after discussion rather than by vote. The syllabus was to be worked out, in the context of what specialisms the faculty members could offer, by agreement between staff and students. Tests and examinations were to be minimal. All meals were to be taken together in the same hall, all physical work (and there was a lot) was to be fairly shared.

For a time, as they say, all went well. The cohesion of the community would seem to have been provided by Rice's vision and patience. Odd as he could be, easy as it is to mock the plump, old-fashioned, free-thinking educationist reclined among his students in the photographs, the man had a sage practical sense of the limits within which the venture could operate successfully. If his own sacking by the rest of the Black Mountain faculty, three years after he had founded the college, hinged immediately on his own transgression of those limits—he had had an affair with a girl student—it also followed a

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EMPSON

is one of the great English critics of this century. His classic works include *Seven Types of Ambiguity* and *The Structure of Complex Words,* and he has earned world-wide respect for both his critical writings and for his unique and sympathetic personality. He is also a poet of great distinction. This volume of essays by a number of today's most distinguished literary figures constitutes an important study of Empson, his work and his impact upon the people and literary studies of our time. Our conception of English literature has changed radically in recent years, and we are becoming increasingly conscious of existing and emerging literary traditions, with particular characteristics of their own. Ten literatures written in English—from Australia, Canada, England, India, Ireland, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, the United States and the West Indies—are discussed in **Literatures of the World in English.** This collection both demonstrates the development of creative writing in English around the world and reflects the growing concern with national cultures.

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ROUTLEDGE

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period of aggressive questioning of his wisdom by a staff (and by students: they rapidly gained access to faculty meetings in this democratic set-up) who had little sense of the delicate balance on which such a community depended. The verbatim transcripts of Black Mountain college meetings again and again show personality conflicts masquerading as differences of educational outlook, the guardians of the original idea—including Theodore Dreier and Josef Albers—holding out through the 1930s and 1940s against attempts to cast the college in a new mould. In the end, after innumerable struggles, rifts and resignations, the college limping along with declining numbers and amazingly tolerant benefactors, Black Mountain becomes a distinctively "American and radical environment", the educational experiment is effectively concluded, and the scene is set for its famous final days: what Mr Duberman sees as the "desperate, illustrious years."

THE INCIDENTAL ACCOUNT of the origins of the Black Mountain school of poetry which Mr Duberman gives in charting the last events in the life of the college serves to illuminate the mixture of moral passion and sheer arrogant craziness that has characterised poetry written under its influence ever since. These are qualities which derive from the figure of Charles Olson which overshadows these final chapters, booming on about the "kinetics of experience" into the small hours, assembling all human knowledge into cranky systematisations, hectoring, exhorting, writing *Maximus*, and drawing from the scrupulously fair and reverential Mr Duberman, many years after, the reluctant reflection that "There was a great deal more 'self-expression' at Black Mountain than selves to express." Olson, one is prepared to venture, was a genius of a kind; even if that kind included much greater, much more informed and integrated men, like Pound and William Carlos Williams. That he was a good example to follow is scarcely proved beyond question by those in the United States—let alone in England—who *have* followed him.

What Olson had to offer in terms of a philosophy of poetry was at best vague and inflated, even for Americans—who might at least catch on to, and use, the idiom of the *Maximus Poems* and the doctrines embodied therein without intolerable strain. For mere imitators on this side of the Atlantic, striving to emulate Olson and Black Mountain has been a process, unhappy to watch, of conscious linguistic deracination, a wrenching of oneself away from native speech rhythms in the attempt to take the beat from the American breath. It's doubtful whether poets can ever adopt in its entirety the language of another culture. It's much more likely (and highly desirable) that they should read, learn, extract—and adapt from it while working within their own received idiom. Olson, Creeley and Dorn have certain things to teach any English poet, properly used. But the accident of the way in which Black Mountain moved into English poetry meant that it became a required procedure either to swallow it whole or to turn one's back as if it did not exist. It is, in fact, high time that the resulting two camps in English poetry, each of which virtually denies the existence of the other, got together in humility to see what they could learn.

DEFERENCE to another strong current of fashion leads Marjorie Perloff,[2] in a study of Robert Lowell's poetry which has many merits, to run off the rails in another familiar direction. Mrs Perloff's technique can be aridly statistical ("In this particular sonnet [one of those for Randall Jarrell], there are thirty-two nouns, twenty-four adjectives, and only two finite verbs, so that the ratio of substantives to predicates is almost thirty to one.") She is capable of writing an account of Lowell's imagery which categorises images with ruthless efficiency to prove that his world is "one of unremitting ugliness, pain and death"—and then failing to prove, in a lurch to an equally unacceptable opposite extreme, that everything is finally invested with "an unexpected radiance" by the creation of a personal mythology not dissimilar to Yeats's. She recovers well in a narrowly-based but firmly argued chapter on Lowell's "imitations", where her case against the poet's selective, idiosyncratic way with the structures of foreign poets carries conviction. And she writes both enthusiastically and appositely (if with a profusion of charts with darting arrows) about Lowell's syntax. Where she goes finally off into oddity is in a scanty final chapter (here the charts, arrows and loops multiply) with a title, "The Artist as Mental Patient", which ought to be acknowledged to some thousands of post-graduate dissertations, where we are to believe that the entire *opus* is quite probably just a transitional sort of achievement. Lowell will be seen as the

> "representative lyric historian of the era between 1945 . . . and the antinomian and self-consciously anarchic future, when the derangement of the senses which Rimbaud proclaimed as the poet's goal more than a hundred years ago, may well have become the norm of lyric poetry."

Mrs Perloff is carried off her feet into this by no

[2] *The Poetic Art of Robert Lowell*. By MARJORIE G. PERLOFF. Cornell University Press, $9.50, £4.75.

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more than a cursory look at post-Lowell confessional verse: uncomfortable on Berryman, inadequate on Plath, and inaccurate in ascribing a poem by Christopher Levenson to, of all people, Christopher *Middleton*. It reads more like a requisite gesture towards a gloomy possibility than a considered appraisal of what most poets (not least Lowell) think and want.

AS ONE MIGHT EXPECT, other American establishment figures such as Robert Frost and Wallace Stevens do not enter much into the reckoning of the Black Mountain *avant-garde*. Robert Francis' accounts of his meetings with Frost,[3] a tiny postscript to the volumes of biography, tempt speculation as to what kind of dialogue the swinger of birches could have struck up with Maximus of Gloucester. . . . Frost and Francis together, great man and trembling worshipper, seem adept at sparking off a splendid range of leaden truisms. "Stevens is a profound misleader", wrote Charles Olson to Cid Corman in 1952—and it is hard to imagine anything farther removed from Olson's quest for spontaneity, his determination to fix self and poem in the here and now, than Stevens's lifelong, infinitely fastidious care to reconcile disordered or mundane reality (the world of suffering mankind and the world of the boardroom) with an inner world of poetry. In her new study of Stevens,[4] Lucy Beckett carefully defines the debt Stevens's philosophy of poetry owed to some expected, some more unusual, forbears. George Santayana, cast convincingly by Miss Beckett as the authentic, if unconscious heir of Matthew Arnold, stands centrally behind Stevens's conception of the role and power of the poetic imagination; and in person he becomes finally for Stevens "the saving goodness, the emblematic victory over life, that in another age would have been represented by the figure of a saint." Santayana, indeed, through the quotations used by Miss Beckett, emerges as a much more lucid and sure exponent of Stevens's philosophy than the poet himself, whose writings on this subject perpetually wander round the point in a state of ceremonious recoil from precision: with scarcely any great poet is it so reassuring as it is with Stevens to turn back from the prose to the verse. For this reason, valuable as it is to have the origins of Stevens's governing idea of the "supreme fiction" thrown so clearly into relief, one reads Miss Beckett's study with respect rather than excitement. In the course of her closely-reasoned analysis of how the

[3] *Robert Frost: A Time to Talk. Conversations and Indiscretions recorded by Robert Francis.* Robson Books, £2.25.

[4] *Wallace Stevens.* By LUCY BECKETT. Cambridge University Press, £3.50.

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philosophy gradually came to its fullest and profoundest expression in the poems, the poems themselves seem somehow to be reduced, to be rendered subservient to the moral message which is extracted from the philosophy—though this is far from her intention, which is to support Stevens's claim that poetry does "help us to live our lives", and adduce his best work as evidence. Walton Litz's *Introspective Voyager*,[5] published two years ago, provides the better all-round introduction to the successive stages of Stevens's development, traces valuably the fluctuations in the critical consensus as to what *is* the best of Stevens, and is, incidentally, more helpful with those—barren or fallow?—years in which the poet wrote very little and meditated a great deal. But one feels very grateful indeed to Miss Beckett for a quotation which will serve admirably to end a necessarily discursive survey of a confused poetic landscape: "The crudity we are too distracted to refine, we accept as originality, and the vagueness we are too pretentious to make accurate, we pass off as sublimity." George Santayana said it. In 1896.

[5] *Introspective Voyager: The Poetic Development of Wallace Stevens*. By A. WALTON LITZ. Oxford University Press, New York.

Victorian Masters

Treatments of Browning and Tennyson—By LAURENCE LERNER

AMONG THE POEMS of Browning that are less widely read than they were is a charming little story called "Count Gismond", in which a woman describes how when she was a young girl giving the prizes away in a tournament her honour was suddenly attacked by a Count Gauthier who claimed to have seduced her; while she was still stupefied, Count Gismond, whom she had never seen before, came to her defence, gave Gauthier the lie, fought and killed him, and is now her husband. She is finishing the story by comparing her children to Gismond when he walks up to her, and she breaks off and changes the subject.

The poem has many of the qualities of Browning's great dramatic monologues—ingenious narrative touches, brilliantly eccentric use of a complicated stanza form to convey the speaking voice, and the sense of a human relationship; yet we no longer place it among his best work because (surely) we are a little embarrassed by the subject. It portrays a purely innocent woman in a compromising situation in which the poet evidently expects us to take her innocence for granted: Browning's usual shrewdness seems here to be limited by Victorian attitudes—by that sexless idealisation of woman that has come to infuriate both the feminists and the Lawrentians. As a result there is a wholly uncritical treatment of the duel between Gismond and Gauthier: instead of exploring what made medieval men believe that duels were a test of truth, Browning is content to take the institution as given. The idealising of feminine innocence limits "The Ring and the Book" too: where the modern reader would see Pompilia and Caponsacchi as sublimating a sexual relationship, the poem merely ignores that dimension, or attributes it to the sneers of the cynical.

A man's greatness is shown by his limitations; and Browning's failure to explore the psychology of his innocent women is a reminder of how marvellously he does explore that of others—of Guido, of the Pope, even of the gossips and lawyers of Rome. And when a bunch of new books on Browning appears, a convenient way of comparing them is to turn up what they have to say not only on the masterpieces, but also on such a piece of litmus paper as "Count Gismond". Mr Blackburn[1] does not mention it: why should he, he might protest, since the purpose of his straightforward and modest study is to pick out the best of Browning for the modern reader, and he is very firm in sorting wheat from chaff. Dr Hair[2] canvasses the suggestion other critics have made that the woman may in fact be guilty, and his interest in genre leads him to point out that "when the reliability of the narrator is thus called into question, the poem becomes an extended piece of irony." This remark has the splendid vacuousness of all tautologies, and it is not, perhaps, surprising that Dr Hair stays on the fence when it comes to deciding about this interpretation. Dr Jack,[3] however, brusquely

[1] *Robert Browning: A Study of his Poetry*. By THOMAS BLACKBURN. Woburn Press, £2.75.
[2] *Browning's Experiments with Genre*. By DONALD S. HAIR. Oliver & Boyd, £4.
[3] *Browning's Major Poetry*. By IAN JACK. Oxford University Press, £5.40.

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refuses to have any truck with such "aberrations of psychological criticism"; "no one but a literary critic could remark without embarrassment . . . that he 'finds the poem much more interesting if the speaker's guilt is assumed'." I am sure Dr Jack is right as far as Browning's intention is concerned, but we do live in the 20th century, and we do find such poems more interesting if they take innocence a little less for granted. Dr Jack emerges from his assertion as resolutely old-fashioned.

The only one of these three books that has a clear thesis is Dr Hair's, and, as it happens, that too provides a useful point of comparison between them: for both Blackburn and Jack are weak on questions of form and genre. Dr Jack's is a scholar's book, with all that phrase implies of excellence and limitation. He is thorough, reliable and (I am sure) always accurate, and he knows and loves his Browning. There is nothing slovenly about his work, and when he makes a statement of fact I believe him; but his mind is neither subtle nor exploratory. He has the scholar's tendency to start from the evidence available rather than from the logic of the discussion; and his views on form are sensible but simplistic—to say (for instance) that "one of the invariable characteristics of a successful poem . . . is the sense . . . that it could not have been written in any other idiom or metrical form" is true in an obvious kind of way, but it does not help us to deal with those poets (of whom Browning is certainly one) who produce some of their best effects by playing form *against* expectation. Yet for all its limitations much of Dr Jack's book is admirable. His discussion of "Childe Roland", for instance, which for many modern readers is Browning's masterpiece, begins by dismissing a lot of ingenious recent readings as nonsense, and then goes on to explore the poem's sources, and its use of materials from the romances that Browning had certainly read—*Palmerin of England*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and so on. Just as one is beginning to say, Yes, very interesting, but what did Browning *do* with the material, Dr Jack turns to this very question, and shows himself well aware of the psychological impact of this mysterious poem, its resemblance to Kafka, the limitations of allegorical interpretations. All in all, a very satisfying discussion, scholarly in the best sense.

THERE IS NOTHING so thorough or illuminating in Mr Blackburn's little book, though it is the most attractively written of the three, and certainly the best introduction. Its main limitation is its failure to distinguish the lyric from the dramatic mode with sufficient clarity, for the nature and value of dramatic poetry must be the central issue in discussing Browning; so it is with a certain hopefulness that one turns to *Browning's Experiments with Genre*, whose title suggests it will go straight to the nub of things. But alas it doesn't, and as Dr Hair dutifully goes through poem after poem sorting out comic from satiric from romantic from ironic from lyric, it becomes clearer and clearer that the concepts are not sufficiently rigorously distinguished in his own mind. When he attempts to see a pattern in "The Ring and the Book" composed of careful transitions between lyric, romantic and ironic I simply do not believe him. There are no magic methods in criticism; and as I watch Dr Hair allowing his valuable approach to become a strait-jacket I realise more and more that the one thing that really counts is the judgment and sensitivity of the critic.

LOOKING FOR A corresponding poem to open the discussion of Tennyson—a poem that tells us a good deal about its author's power and limitation, that places him in his age and does not represent what the 20th century values him for—I choose "Maud." It is certainly a poem that grapples with its time, a time "when only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie", and, to the indignation of contemporaries as much as of us, turns its anger against the pacific free-trade ethic into a glorification of war as a way of cleansing "a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold." It is full of fascinating Victorian attitudes that it does us good to get used to, and that is a reason for reading it, but not, clearly, the central reason. We read it for its lyrical intensity, not just the polished grace of the too-familiar "Come into the garden Maud" but the frenzied beauty of its wilder moments:

Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer,
and found
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

And we can't fail to be intrigued by its dramatic quality, the poet's evident attempt to distance himself from the unbalanced young man who starts in near-paranoia and passes through the insanity of believing himself dead. Dramatic? Not after comparison with Browning, for there is a permanent ambivalent involvement by Tennyson himself: distancing is withdrawn at crucial moments, and there is none of the poised deployment of details of the situation that Browning handles so brilliantly.

All this is clearly seen, and very well said, by Philip Drew[4] in what is probably the best piece of criticism in this whole batch, an essay that

[4] "Tennyson and the Dramatic Monologue", by Philip Drew, in *Tennyson*, edited by D. J. PALMER. Writers and their Background Series. G. Bell & Sons, £4.50.

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plays a general interest in the nature of the dramatic very finely against a vivid sense of the particular poem. D. J. Palmer's collection of essays is in fact of an impressively high standard, and of all these books the one I would most advise the poetry-reader to spend his money on. Mr Palmer himself writes on Tennyson's Romantic Heritage with a clear eye for literary influences and psychological conflicts, but few real insights into poetic technique: he should perhaps have changed subjects with John Jump, who writes on Tennyson's Religious Faith and Doubt with only a moderate interest in the religious controversies themselves but a very perceptive and sensitive awareness of the poet's language. John Killham offers an intelligent survey of Victorian social attitudes, illustrated from Tennyson, and Lionel Madden manages to impart interest even to that uninspiring form, the reader's guide.

THE ONE CONTRIBUTOR who seems out of place among these sophisticated academics is Sir Charles Tennyson, grandson and biographer of the poet, whose old-world charm, detailed knowledge of Tennyson's works and critical technique of simple assertion can be seen at greater length in his reissued collection of essays.[5] After too much sophistication such naivety has its value, and Sir Charles' attack on T. S. Eliot, in his essay on Tennyson's Religion, does point to the rather pretentious nebulousness from which that distinguished critic was not always exempt. Yet though Sir Charles' love of Tennyson's poetry is so attractive, and his knowledge so thorough, he is not in the end very interesting as a critic, for he never distinguishes adequately between the poet's opinions and the poem's meanings.

A crucial distinction between sensation and reflection runs through all the discussions of Tennyson, between a richness of response to the world, that finds a technique to match it; and a conscientious attempt to deal with the issues of the age—between what links Tennyson to Keats and what links him to T. H. Huxley. The distinction was drawn in Hallam's review of the 1830 volume of *Poems*, and developed by J. S. Mill a few years later. "There are in the character of every true poet," wrote Mill, "two elements, for one of which he is indebted to nature, for the other to cultivation." The province of nature is fineness of sense, the rendering of states of enjoyment or suffering; that of culture is systematic reasoning and the shaping of sensuous imagery into spiritual meaning. It is doubtful if modern critics have improved on this formulation, and all the best of them—Eliot, Nicolson, Auden,

[5] *Six Tennyson Essays*. By CHARLES TENNYSON. S.R. Publishers, £2.50.

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Ricks—and even some a little less good—Leavis, David Cecil, Valerie Pitt and some of Mr Palmer's team—use a variant on this distinction. Everyone agrees on Tennyson's mastery of the province of nature, but after that there are two schools of thought: those who think he should have left the province of culture alone, not ruminated or wrestled with religious doubts or political fears, and those who admire him precisely for his attempt to use his poetic talents in the service of ideas. Roughly speaking, the first school derives from Hallam, the second from Mill, and they are still battling it out.

IN CONCLUSION, I should say explicitly what I have simply assumed: that these are two of our greatest poets, and only an incapacitating prejudice against anything Victorian can now prevent us from realising this. For they are poets for our time too; Browning's dramatic vigour, his ironic awareness of the full meaning of a human situation, and Tennyson's astonishing lyric subtlety, and ability to be personal at a level few poets can reach to—these are the territories modern poetry has set out to conquer. Admirers of Pound and Lowell, open your Browning; of Yeats and Valéry, your Tennyson; and marvel.

Things Hid and Barred from Common Sense

Responses to Shakespeare—By PHILIP BROCKBANK

"THAT LIFE IS WORTH LIVING is the most necessary of assumptions and, were it not assumed, the most impossible of conclusions." This is the desolating, Augustan voice of Santayana, mediated by the distinguished American scholar Elkin Cahoun Wilson[1] who in his retirement finds reason for commending to us the "mature comic spirit" of a Shakespeare who, "having looked before and after, yet knows how to live wisely and well in the extant moment." Some may feel that the disciple has made odd choice of a master. Mr Wilson can say that "Celia's voice is that of the comic spirit, wise with wit and humour as I have explicated those terms", while Santayana, less given to "explication", is called to witness that "the muse of reflection follows in the train of Dionysus, and the revel or the rude farce passes into humane comedy." Like Nietzsche's Zarathustra, Santayana shuts his door upon the house of scholars and will not address himself to the cracking of nuts. Mr Wilson's own muse of reflection offers to be more systematic and returns often to "the comic" as if he had just translated the term from a German more like Hegel's than Nietzsche's. His essay nevertheless expresses, with touches of sentimental indulgence and apocalyptic dismay, a real delight in the comedies, with the spacious hope that "reason and humour will save us if saved we are to be."

For Santayana salvation is a remote prospect as "Civilization is perhaps approaching one of those long winters that overtake it from time to time." But Terence Hawkes, many years from retirement, feels able in *Shakespeare's Talking Animals*[2] to proclaim a new spring, seeing television doing for our own society what drama once did for Elizabethan England. Under the guidance of Marshall McLuhan he claims that we are the disappointed survivors of a civilisation based on the written word and the expectant heirs of a more unified one, to be created out of images and the spoken word. And Mr Hawkes has another mentor too—Walter J. Ong, author of *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*. It was Shakespeare's privilege not only to flourish in a pre-literate society (the oral-aural kind which the plays self-consciously commend), but also in a literary ethos which had still to feel the impact of Ramus's splitting of three of the elements of rhetoric (Invention, Disposition and Memory) from the other two (Elocution and Delivery), leaving men free to order their thoughts in dehumanised silence and abstraction.

Both claims have their due validity, but both become embarrassments when unremittingly pursued through literature with the jargon, the postulates and the confidence of the behavioural science of communications. Those of us who believe, *pace* McLuhan, that the differences between one accomplishment and another within the same medium are more significant than the samenesses conferred by the medium, and those who find many of the issues raised by

[1] *Shakespeare, Santayana and the Comic.* By ELKIN CAHOUN WILSON. Allen & Unwin, £4.50.

[2] *Shakespeare's Talking Animals.* By TERENCE HAWKES. Edward Arnold, £4.

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and against Ramus anticipated in the 12th century by John of Salisbury's superb railleries against the spurious figure of "Cornificious", will find many of Mr Hawkes's arguments less than convincing. But although they are sometimes too hectically and extravagantly stated, it remains in some sense true that "speech at all levels of society has a paramount status in human life as the essential element on which the entire moral, political and social fabric rests", and that "the setting of 'word' against 'word' must finally result in the dissolution of communal existence."

Awkwardness comes from a Shandean eagerness to follow his nose. He often writes as if all human ordeals find always their cause, rather than sometimes their manifestation, in the failure of the oral-aural relationship, and that the failure can be sufficiently accounted for by the growth of literacy in the history of "communications." As he says himself, it sometimes becomes necessary "to isolate the strain of 'talking and listening' unfairly and artificially in order to perceive it at all." Much can be caught without strain, however, and it is true that books can set a distance between people, and that Shakespeare knew it and was among those who delighted in talk: "What is the end of study? let me know .... Why, that to know which else we would not know.... Things hid and barr'd, you mean, from common sense? . . . Ay, that is study's god-like recompense." But even *Love's Labour's Lost* cannot fully be persuaded to serve Mr Hawkes's needs. "Life itself triumphs over human aridity", he says, in the course of an illuminating but tantalising chapter, "as love triumphs over letters." But love and learning, talking and reading, are all "vain delights" in the youthful and springtime play-world of Navarre; the aspirations of students and lovers alike are checked by intimations of experience to be purchased by a "penny of observation." The play is an invitation to enjoy Navarre but to prepare for France, images of protected adolescence and of the world of death and weather still to come. But it remains a feat of literacy, written and re-written with a mastery of the pedants' rhetoric that no other writer of the period can rival: "How well he's read, to reason against reading!"

From the histories Mr Hawkes takes for his purpose *Richard II*, and again the play can be made to dance to his tune (so indeed could *King John*, to advantage). But again, the hypothesis is a little too greedy. He says of Gaunt's valediction that, "instead of a place of warm human colloquy, a resonant world of 'language', the 'little world' of Britain has become under Richard a stale, blotted, and badly bound book, a silent and cold world of written words." The evidence is Gaunt's gloss upon the England that is "now leas'd out", "bound in with shame, with inky blots, and rotten parchment bonds." But the point, turned into Gaunt's wit out of Shakespeare's reading of Holinshed, is that Richard's blank charters had mortgaged the resources of the realm and "bound" refers to constraints upon freedom and not to books at all. Mr Hawkes says of the king "the play insists over and again that his presence actually inhibits oral-aural interaction". That sentence, alas, could only come from a book, and the reader (who is very like a listener) may feel as Dull felt in the presence of Holofernes ("'Tis true indeed; the collusion holds in the exchange"). But the jargon may more readily be excused than the determination to see Richard too exclusively as a formidable conversation-stopper. He is so, but for a complex of reasons outside the scope of Mr Hawkes's thesis: the ceremonious language of the play is related to the exhausted ceremonies of government recorded in the chronicles (the last trial by combat, the arrested tournament); the language that Bolingbroke discards is that of the lists and formal appeal; and the ceremonious solace of speech that consoles the abdicating Richard is first heard in the exchanges between Gaunt and the Duchess in the play's second scene.

In this, as in other of Shakespeare's plays, there is much that resists Mr Hawkes's approach; but, it is good to report, much that yields to it too. For my part, I am content when he talks of language and of talk, less so when he insists on the primacy of his argument. I would rather he did not say of Macbeth that the "final downfall of his world takes place, appropriately, on a linguistic level"; I am sure that if he were talking to us Mr Hawkes would put his point more felicitiously. Perhaps he would also allow that Chapter 16, "The Book as Symbol", in Curtius's *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, is much in need of an answer.

"WHAT IS THE PROPER PLACE of dream and the irritational", asks Miss Marjorie B. Garber, "in the life of man?" The misprint comes providentially at the end of a paragraph in *Dream in Shakespeare*[3] when Miss Garber is placing other dream-critics (Northrop Frye, Wilson Knight, Derek Traversi) in perspective; they have used "dream" as "a descriptive term supportive of the author's thesis", whereas it seems that what is needed is a systematic examina-

[3] *Dream in Shakespeare*. By MARJORIE B. GARBER. Yale University Press, $10.00, £5.

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tion of specific uses. There follows a classification of dream and its attributes into three general forms, and it is clear that another phase of a doctorate thesis is well under way. Miss Garber does not pursue an argument, however, but engages in a slow, fitfully systematic, inquiry into the turning pages of the plays. Because her theme is a good one and the material rich, there may be readers content to follow her. Others may wonder if they need the kind of assistance she feels able to offer—"The subconscious thought 'Gloucester wants to murder me', rejected by the conscious, here appears in the disguised form 'Gloucester will kill me by accident, though he doesn't want to' ", "Imogen is now in the dream state, unable to distinguish the apparently real from the fictive or illusory", "The play metaphor, thus integrated into the ongoing action, is a hint of what will come", "The subsequent 'discovery' of Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess is yet another naturalized rebirth, like the awakening of Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*."

There is much in this manner, much that the most simple-minded of us may be trusted to think of for himself. It is sometimes appropriately dismissive to say "very interesting, but is it true?"; in the present case the response might be, "very true, but is it interesting?" Yet dream and vision are momentous concerns in the literature and criticism of the middle ages and the renaissance, and there is much to be asked about them. What, for example, is the intellectual and imaginative history of Theseus's great speech, what does it owe to Plato, Ficino and Sidney, what is its after-history in the plays and outside them? Miss Garber tells us, among other comparable things, that "the triad of lunatic, lover, and poet is meant to demean the roles of poet and lover and comes oddly from a Theseus who has won Hippolyta by the sword." Elsewhere, a lonely reference to Plato and dreams sends us to another Ph.D. dissertation, with the remark that "The conventional association of dream with madness is explicitly articulated in Shakespeare by Theseus (MND V.i.2ff)." There is no evidence that the material glanced at has ever been assimilated—Plato, Plutarch, John of Salisbury, Seneca; and much more passes unnoticed (the old play *Conflict of Conscience*, for instance, and William Perkins's *Cases of Conscience* are not mentioned in the chapter on "Dream and 'Conscience' in the Tragedies"). Miss Garber is not yet in a strong position to tell us more than we already know, but in the meantime it is good to be reminded of the ubiquity of dream in Shakespeare's art.

IT WAS THE STAGE-REALISATION of a dream that prompted Ronald Watkins some twenty-five years ago to make an admirable little book, based on a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Harrow School, called *Moonlight at the Globe*. It did much to refresh both the teaching and the playing of Shakespeare, and even something to change the reading habits of those unaccustomed to staging the plays in the Globe of the mind. There followed an ampler book, *On Producing Shakespeare*, which remains the best of its kind, taking much from seemingly remote scholarship (T. W. Baldwyn's, for example) and much from re-creative practice. Now, with his colleague Jeremy Lemmon, Mr Watkins has launched a new series under the general title *In Shakespeare's Playhouse*, a first volume on *The Poet's Method* and a second on *Macbeth*.[4] The enterprise opens with a melancholy reflection recalling the tone of earlier volumes to the effect that Shakespeare is paradoxically much admired, "yet the least admired of his qualities is his skill as a playwright." The bibliography (of some fifty books) suggests otherwise, and the question now would seem to be not, do we attend enough to Shakespeare's stagecraft?, but do we give it the right kind of attention? Mr Watkins began by basing his work on J. C. Adams's reconstruction of the Globe Playhouse, and in essentials he does so still. It is perhaps significant that George R. Kernodle's remarkable book, *From Art to Theatre*, is omitted from the bibliography. To set it alongside J. C. Adams is to recognise two different traditions at work both in the history of the theatre and in our understanding of it.

Adams's version is strongly domestic, plain carpentry, conscious of its derivation from the inn-yard, the cock-pit and the bear-garden; Kernodle's is festive and symbolic, gilded and intricate, conscious of analogues in the rhetorical stages of the Netherlands and in architectural façades. Those who write under the spell of Adams are likely to call attention to what is workmanlike and plainly, or richly, human; those who find continuities between the theatre and symbolic architecture are more likely to attend to allusion and allegory in the plays. By domestic convention to use an upper level is to signify a bedroom, a balcony or a city wall; by symbolic convention it suggests remoteness, authority, dominion over the action. The present volumes make much of the "neutrality" of the Elizabethan stage. I would prefer a fuller recognition of the rhythmic relationship between the two traditions; using what Kernodle calls "side accent" there can be a lively impression of public

[4] *The Poet's Method*. By RONALD WATKINS and JEREMY LEMMON. £3.75. *Macbeth*. By RONALD WATKINS and JEREMY LEMMON. £3.25. Both "In Shakespeare's Playhouse" series, David & Charles.

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life going on in the theatre, using centre accent a figure can be isolated against the façade in a symbolic setting that is more than social.

The Watkins and Lemmon version of *Macbeth* is a little too domestic. Thus the account of I. vii. 1–28 takes off from the stage-direction, *Enter a Sewer, and divers Servants with Dishes and Service over the Stage*, and Burbage is imagined coming to the front of the stage to "rap out" his opening sentence, "If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well It were done quickly"; he keeps our consciousness of the feast by glancing at the door supposed to lead to it, and his final words are interrupted "by a renewal of the sounds of revelry and music, as the door of the imagined banquet-room is momentarily open for Lady Macbeth's entry." It need not be quite like that. Macbeth could stay back-stage, at the centre, dominated by the façade, with enough awed isolation to give point to the reminiscence of Christ's words to Judas at the last supper, "That thou doest, do quickly." But a play is the sum of many possible performances, and this which comes from Elizabethan Harrow is a welcome one. The books will probably be more often consulted by producers (particularly in schools) than read by merely literate Shakespeareans. I would hope for fewer adjectives in the volumes to come ("there is a grim and ironical relish, coming well from the brave Captain, in the very idea of such polite formalities preceding such gruesome slaughter").

Professor S. L. Goldberg's *An Essay on King Lear*[5] keeps its distance from the theatre and often retreats from the play into reflection: "As with Lear so with us: the need to know and thus to master everything meets only the impossibility of doing so; and the impossibility is the need finally to answer to everything with the whole of the self and yet to know, or to utter, or to see, or to feel, or to love—in short, to be —something particular." The essay will be of value to those of similar cast of mind who can feel that abstractions are points of arrival: "In short, while we can have the experiences or have their relationship—their full meaning, as it were—we cannot have either without some loss of the other; yet since our experience of neither seems complete without the awareness of the other, our consciousness reaches for some third inconceivable thing, which would, without loss, contain both. To many people, of course, this inconceivable something is the Absolute, or the Supreme Fiction, or God." I would myself feel more ready to dwell upon such passages if the few moments of close engagement with the play gave more confidence. On his way to prison, for example, Lear cries "Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia, The Gods themselves throw incense." Professor Goldberg quotes the line and some of those which follow, and relates them to the more famous speech ("like birds i' th'cage", in which he finds a "touch of sentimental unreality") simply as "accompanying violence." Lear's reminiscences of Pharaoh's dream, of the burning of the Philistine fields and, some would say, of Jephthah's daughter and the destruction of Sodom (the "brand from heaven") deserve more precise attention. The play persuades us that significant moral development can somehow be sustained in a distressed and senile consciousness, and these fragmentary images of purgation by violence, caught from the Old Testament, are a part of the process. The essay, however, often witnesses to the power of the play and it charts Professor Goldberg's often intense responses.

KATHARINE M. WILSON in *Shakespeare's Sugared Sonnets*[6] has the energy and innocence to proclaim that "putting Shakespeare's sonnets in their literary background leaves no chink for a real man and woman." Her study, which displays a nicely ranging knowledge of the sonnets of the time, seeks to show that Shakespeare offers us skilled exercises in parody. Hers is a more readable enterprise than many, for it is clear that she would rather keep Mercutio company ("Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in") than Holofernes. Her judgments, however, owe too much to her readiness to distinguish overconfidently between nature and art. She makes merry progress through some early plays and wins some insights into them with the help of such phrases as "Platonic friendship and sonnet love", "sonnet artifice and love's language." Plays and sonnets alike become affectionate but mocking farewells to a literary convention and a courtly style. She allows the sonnet too small an orchestra, however, and her allegations of "parody" are often too casually made. Sonnet 30, she tells us, "mocks by singing Constable's tune. Here are grand abstract nouns—'sessions of sweet, silent thought', 'remembrance of things past' . . . 'death's dateless night'." The sonnet cannot be so promptly set aside; the word "sessions", for example, begins auspiciously to go with "sweet" and "silent", but it turns towards the lawcourts when we reach "summon up", and the recall of the past becomes judicial and not merely nostalgic. Here, and elsewhere, Miss Wilson's critical description falls too short of the poet's art, and where the courtly voice is heard in its full range of generous and sardonic tones

[5] *An Essay on King Lear*. By S. L. GOLDBERG. Cambridge University Press, £3.50.

[6] *Shakespeare's Sugared Sonnets*. By KATHERINE M. WILSON. Allen & Unwin, £5.

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(*e.g.* Sonnet 116) she is apt to devalue the one while promoting the other.

Miss Wilson treats Sonnet 127 as a parody of Sidney's Sonnet VII, but Mr Roger Prior, writing last year in the *Times*, finds in its intricate puns and allusions a description of the person and plight of Emilia Lanier. Emilia Bassano, as all who are interested will by now know, was mistress to the first Lord Hunsdon, patron to Shakespeare's company of the Chamberlain's men. Expecting a child, she was married for convenience to the minstrel William Lanier, a fact which registers according to Prior in, to begin with, "beauty slandered with a bastard shame"—for contemporary pronunciation would allow the reading "beauty's lan'ered" (i.e. *Lanier'd*) and the dark secret is out.

WE OWE OUR KNOWLEDGE of Emilia to the diaries of Simon Forman, through the enthusiasm and diligence of Dr A. L. Rowse,[7] and it seems that "students of our literature, and of Shakespeare in particular, must be grateful to the old reprobate." It must be allowed that the case for Emilia is stronger than any made for her rivals; the domestic circumstances outlined by Rowse together with Prior's literary probings into the sonnets and his discovery of Emilia's poems, make it probable enough that there are routes from the sonnets into the pages of both Forman and Petrarch. Keats said that "Shakespeare led a life of allegory; his works are the comments on it", and the life takes in both reading and living relationships, with one informing the other in ways sometimes no doubt obscure even to the writer. It does not therefore follow that our little, often stereotyped, reconstructions of the "life" from the debris are of much service to the art. The consequence of present claims for our reading of the sonnets' art is that we have new licence to keep ourselves watchful for puns on certain proper names. And if we name the Dark Lady it must be on Shakespeare's terms, and not in the mood of the Sunday-journal curiosity that is fairly brought to bear on Forman. Puns are apt to respond to our obsessions, however, for may not a Constable attend Shakespeare's "summons", and Prior be read as "prier", and a familiar name found in Cassio's, "Fore God, they have given me a rowse already"? The mouse-eyed may notice that the observation attributed to Forman in Dr Rowse's earlier book, that Emilia was "very brown in youth" has now been silently corrected (at Stanley Wells's prompting in a radio talk?) to "very brave in youth."

Emilia apart, there is little that Forman can contribute to our understanding of Shakespeare. His brief play-going accounts are literal and banal, and the little that Dr Rowse finds to say about them is misleading. It is likely that Samuel Johnson is intended in his allusion to "Ben Jonson's strictures upon such an incoherent farrago of fable" (although Ben would concur) but it is not clear if Dr Rowse wishes to make the judgment of *Cymbeline* his own. The interesting feature of the account of *The Winter's Tale* is that Forman surprisingly makes no mention of the resurrection scene, leading some to wonder if it was first played without it. As for *Richard II*, Dr Rowse oddly supposes that the play Forman saw at the Globe in 1611 was Shakespeare's and he leaves the innocent reader in no doubt of it. He explains that the scenes described must have been cut or altered to make the surviving version, but Shakespeare's play cannot for a moment be thought to accommodate a Duke of Lancaster who "privily contrived all villainy" to set his son on the throne, and Rowse spares no glance at other surviving plays on Richard (*Jack Straw*, *Woodstock*) nor at evidence for lost ones (which Forman appears to supply). For scholars the book will have a limited usefulness, for the papers are severely abbreviated, edited and simplified. Those, however, who wish to learn "some very unsavoury details" about "a lascivious son of a bishop" will not be disappointed with *Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age*. Dr Rowse has made another contribution to the history of gossip.

WE MUST BE GRATEFUL to Cambridge University Press for reprinting James Smith's *Scrutiny* essays, together with a number of previously unpublished pieces deftly edited by Mr Edward M. Wilson.[8] The earlier essays on the comedies remain among the best of their kind, civilised, lucid, judicious and precise, with much close observation that does not too much attempt to do our reading for us. The freshly edited pieces on *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* are more diffuse and explanatory and one wishes that his own refining art could earlier have brought them to press. A slightly amplified edition of Professor M. C. Bradbrook's *Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy*[9] carries a new chapter, "Elizabethan Comedy in the Theatre of Today", mixing a useful summary of recent theatrical and critical performances with some appropriations of the new modes and the new lingo—"The Sociology of Shape Changing."

[7] *Simon Forman: Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age*. By A. L. ROWSE. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £4.50.
[8] *Shakespearian and other Essays*. By JAMES SMITH. Cambridge University Press, £5.50.
[9] *Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy*. New and revised edition. By M. C. BRADBROOK. Chatto and Windus, £2.75.

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It remains a necessary book, but the attempt to say something about each of perhaps a hundred and fifty plays in the light of certain social and literary preoccupations makes for exhausting reading, and the frequent touches of local colour do not quite atone for the quotidian ordinariness of much of the material.

The Critical Heritage Series has issued the first of several volumes devoted to Shakespeare criticism, and the first, edited by Brian Vickers, covers the years 1623–1692.[10] One wonders if the book would have been thought necessary were it not for the importunities of a "series" which can hardly afford to leave out Shakespeare. With so many anthologies of Shakespearean material available, there are here only about half a dozen items which will not be familiar to most of us, and all of these are easily accessible. Selections from Restoration adaptations are tantalising, and those who are interested will certainly find their way to the Cornmarket press facsimiles or to such reprints as Montague Summers's *Shakespeare Adaptations*. The Introduction seems to play a hand with but few high cards; but the volume in time to be devoted to our own decades may find comparable embarrassment.

[10] *Shakespeare: the Critical Heritage*. Vol. 1, 1623–1692. Edited by BRIAN VICKERS. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £6.50.

A Social Theology

On Orwell—By ERIC HOMBERGER

ORWELL IS STILL worth arguing for, worth appropriating; and therefore worth debunking. Robert Conquest called Orwell "one of the major influences on modern poetry" in *New Lines* (1956); there will be a session on "George Orwell and the 1930s" at training schools organised by the International Socialists this summer. One facet, at least, of the critical debate over Orwell has followed political lines: Isaac Deutscher and Raymond Williams arguing against, John Strachey sitting on the fence, and Lionel Trilling enthusiastically for. But when one critic writes about the sadism and paranoia, when another writes of "Masochism as Literary Strategy", and when others find clues to Orwell's imagination in his obsession with dirt and smells, the true balance of his work is being distorted. To disagree over the interpretation of Orwell's work, and the direction of his thought, is to take his work seriously; but to say, as Alan Sandison does of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, "only in a very superficial sense is the book talking about politics", is to turn the whole spirit of his work inside out. Orwell could not have been more explicit in "Why I Write": "Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, *against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic Socialism, as I understand it." It takes a very brave man to write this off as nothing more than a rationalisation of some inner and obviously less worthy compulsion.

Alan Sandison's recent book on Orwell[1] begins with the observation that though traditional liberalism no longer exists, Orwell felt that certain values of the liberal-Christian culture cannot be abandoned, especially "its belief in the objectivity of truth and in individual integrity." Dr Sandison argues that Orwell's *point de repère* is the Reformation. He reads Orwell's development as a religious search for absolution and moral identity. When Winston Smith tearfully embraces Big Brother, Dr Sandison sees this as Orwell's surrender to the deepest impulses of his life, the desire to give up his personal autonomy before the only body in our age which can give absolution: the totalitarian state. But Orwell didn't join the Communist Party when he finished *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, or become an R.C. convert, which is the logical conclusion of Dr Sandison's book. To assume that Winston Smith expresses Orwell's own predicament, that his surrender is Orwell's, perpetuates a glaring example of the autobiographical fallacy. Smith may share attitudes with Orwell, but the degree to which he is himself the creation of the Party, and shares its values, makes a closer identification impossible. The example of Gletkin and Rubashov in Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* stands behind the relationship between Smith and O'Brien, rather than any autobiographical pres-

[1] *The Last Man in Europe: An Essay on George Orwell*. By ALAN SANDISON. Macmillan, £4.95.

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sure, or at least in the way Dr Sandison suggests.

Despite Orwell's professed agnosticism, Dr Sandison uses the specifically theological content of Protestantism to explain things which other critics have usually considered in social or political terms. On Orwell's view of class consciousness he writes, "Orwell altogether imbues the form of class-distinction with his own spiritual and moral crisis. It becomes a barrier which he himself has created out of his own basic self-division to epitomise that self-division." But Orwell's comments cannot be emptied of their meaning quite so easily. He had a particularly useful argument to make when the Communist Party line was so crude. That class pervades all social relations, that it comes to have an existence independent of the will of individuals, was not an original point. When he sets it out in the second half of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, asserting that class consciousness has become a major barrier to socialism. Orwell was aware that he was arguing against others and not merely against a divided self.

ORWELL DESCRIBES in the ninth chapter of *Wigan Pier* how he decided to associate with the "symbolic victims of injustice", the English working class, in order to absolve his guilt at his role as one of the oppressors during his time in Burma. He describes a common lodging-house in Limehouse, and how deeply he feared uncovery and humiliation as he entered. But the " 'Ave a cup of tea, chum!" from an ominous-looking stevedore opens the way to "a kind of baptism." The pattern of experience (guilt-expiation-baptism-release) is clear enough. Orwell provides a structure to explain his own feelings. But to take the metaphor for the fact is utterly to mistake the extent to which *Down and Out in Paris and London* and the lodging-house incident recalled in *The Road to Wigan Pier* were straightforward descriptions of Orwell's own experience. Stansky and Abrahams point out in their excellent biographical study, *The Unknown Orwell* (Constable, 1972), that the narrative of *Down and Out* covers four months, but the incidents described are from two distinct periods: the winter of 1928 and the summer of 1931. The book is a complex mixture of invention and autobiography, but Dr Sandison does not see much point in the distinction. There are reasons why Orwell chose this particular way to relate the experience. This passage and others like it tell us less about Orwell's religious aspirations than about his sense of the difficulties

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of community. That an open, non-homosexual relationship could be possible between an ex-Etonian and a stevedore in Limehouse might quite legitimately be described in spiritual terms. Certainly nothing in Orwell's previous social experience, nor anything in the ethos of the English bourgeoisie, could account for it. Images of community, in which men relate to each other as comrades, define the only kind of salvation which interested Orwell.

Occasionally Dr Sandison misreads Orwell to make his point. He discusses a 1940 essay, "Notes on the Way", summarising Orwell: the abandonment of religious belief has not resulted in the consequences one desires. We are, Orwell says, in "a cesspool filled with barbed wire." Dr Sandison concludes that Orwell feels that *religion* is still needed, without which "man's moral nature could not sustain itself." But what Orwell wants to do is to "reinstate the belief in human brotherhood without the need for a 'next world' to give it meaning." Again it is the use of the language and imagery of religion which Dr Sandison takes to define the substance of Orwell's position. It might be more appropriate to re-translate *The Last Man in Europe* into the framework of socialist humanism. It would certainly be truer to the tenor of Orwell's work.

AT THE END of his life, in a TB sanatorium in Gloucestershire, Orwell received a note from Jacintha Buddicum, renewing a friendship after nearly thirty years. Between 1914 and 1922 Orwell had been a frequent guest (on occasion a paying guest, as letters from Mrs Blair make clear) of the Buddicums in Shiplake-on-Henley. *Eric and Us* is a remarkable family memoir by the eldest of the three Buddicum children, now a woman in her seventies.[2] Her relationship with the young Eric Blair was perhaps as close as he allowed himself at this time with anyone except his mother. In a letter of 15 February 1949 he replied to Miss Buddicum:

> "You were such a tender-hearted girl, always full of pity for the creatures we others shot and killed. But you were not so tender-hearted to me when you abandoned me to Burma with all hope denied."

Miss Buddicum makes no comment on this. She reprints a diary entry of 8 June 1949: "Letter from Eric about 'Nothing ever dies'," but the original letter has been lost. And she prints a

[2] *Eric and Us: A Remembrance of George Orwell.* By JACINTHA BUDDICUM. Leslie Frewin, £3.50.

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poem which she wrote in 1971:

Dear ghost, forgive me—
I can't explain
rejected vow,
neglected pen—
if I could live
my life again
would I do now
as I did then?

Material for one of the great romantic novelists, perhaps. Stansky and Abraham's view of Orwell as an adolescent with no continuous relationships other than with his mother, with no deep or passionate friendships, will have to be modified. Miss Buddicum affirms one's sense of Orwell's normality. She doesn't know what to make of later developments in "Orwell", as opposed to the nice Eric Blair she knew, or in contemporary literature ("Most of Lawrence's novels seem to me too messy, and Joyce's mad—there are better things to read than all this grubby garrulity. . .").

But then the Edwardians never did.

Lullabies for a Sleeping Giant

New fiction—By JONATHAN RABAN

IT IS A GREAT PITY that the lure of the Booker Prize has led publishers to bring out the best novels on their lists in the autumn. Perhaps because of this, the first five months of 1974 have seen a slouching procession of mutants and also-rans: novels cobbled together out of old screenplays and TV scripts; dim, hesitant little snatches of autobiography; capers cooked up when the author was feeling off-colour; ranting tracts whose claims to being fiction at all rest primarily on their licentious way with the reality they purport to portray. Beside this crew of weedy nags, the new Iris Murdoch looks like a mythical winged horse; Pegasus put out to graze among the farmyard mules. At a time when fiction seems harder and harder to write with any confidence, Miss Murdoch makes it look as easy and natural as breathing. She wears her formidable intelligence with a careless swagger, and her astonishingly fecund, playful imagination looks as fresh and effortless as ever. *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*[1] is her sixteenth novel: it adds a glassy new extension to the mansion of her fiction and cannily leaves more room to build on. Part of the joy of reading Iris Murdoch is the implicit assurance that there will be more to come, that the book in hand is an instalment in a continuing work which grows more and more important as each new novel is added to it.

In *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* she has constructed an intricate honeycomb, a civilisation in miniature, full of interior walls, boundaries, conventions. The book opens with two houses on the suburban fringe between Buckinghamshire and northwest London: Hood House and Locketts, divided from each other by a box hedge and an ambiguous and disputed orchard. The Gavenders live in Hood House, the perfect family of three. Blaise is a psychoanalyst, Harriet is a large serene matron; their child David is a grave, sage adolescent. Beyond the orchard, at Locketts, lives Montague Small, a Murdoch-magus whose ancestry goes back to Mischa Fox in *Flight From the Enchanter*; creator of the fictional detective Milo Fane and involuntarily haunted in nightmares by the image of his dead wife, Sophie. In Iris Murdoch, everything goes in pairs—two houses, two families (one burgeoning, one spoiled and incomplete), two distinct selves for every character—as if the box hedge were really a mirror and Locketts a gnomic reflection of the future of Hood House. The novel opens out to reveal a further world, another mysterious double: for Blaise has a secret life in Putney, south of the river (a distinction which first cropped up in *Under the Net*, when Jake defined north London as "necessary" and south London as "contingent"), where he maintains another ménage of three—his mistress Emily, their son Luca, and an alarming female lodger called Pinn.

This ingeniously contrived model hints at an infinite regression of such symmetries and divisions. With just a few characters, a garden, and three doll's-houses, each with a cutaway wall to reveal their inner goings-on to the audience, Miss Murdoch creates a teeming society, so densely populated and so morally fraught that we are readily persuaded that it is the world. Her fiction, with its compressions, its brilliant stage-lighting and fierce logic, is the wind tunnel in which she

[1] *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine*. By IRIS MURDOCH. Chatto & Windus, £2.50.

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tests the morality of her characters to breaking-point. *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* is really an experiment to see just how far it is possible for a person to keep his own private moral world intact.

Each life in the novel is almost exaggeratedly individual: the very names of these people assert their confidence in the outlines of their identities. No one called Blaise Gavender could be in much doubt about his own weightiness. The thick box hedge which separates Hood House from Locketts just happens to be the most immediately visible wall of a labyrinth which boxes everybody in behind a clipped, impenetrable tangle of greenery. Blaise himself lives in a compartment of civilised compromise, founded on deception (a useful fiction, dreamed up for him by the resourceful Monty Small) and sustained by determined self-evasion. Harriet dwells in the generous, warm enclosure of marriage and motherhood; Montague Small withdraws scrupulously into a carapace of cold selfhood; Emily snarls from the foetid animal cage where she and her child are kept by Blaise. But there is a hole in the box hedge, big enough to wriggle through; and Miss Murdoch's main interest is in those acts of trespass—between Hood House and Locketts, Putney and Buckinghamshire, and, finally, between every conceivable pair of her elaborately fortified characters—which threaten to plunge the whole slender artifice of civilised conduct into a chaos where there are no hedges, no boundaries at all. The most dangerous people are those whose identities are fluid enough to allow them to move illicitly through the labyrinth: the egregious Pinn, with her glinting secretary's spectacles, who is, as Blaise observes, "socially speaking . . . in fairly rapid motion"; Luca, the silent, foreboding child with his "unusually high specific gravity"; the family dogs, who are mostly named after mythical heroes; and the loathsome fictional people who are Monty Small's surrogate children. These are the spies and trespassers who precipitate all the planetary collisions of the adults in the book. At the end, no one has been left undisturbed by the ripple of consequences which spreads from the shadowy, unidentified presence of the child who appears as an onlooker on the first page.

Titian's "Sacred and Profane Love" is a puzzle-painting; it inverts our customary notions of "sacred" and "profane", and makes an even darker confusion by using the same model to portray both kinds of love. It masquerades as an illustration of moral conventions, but in fact it collapses them. *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* does much the same thing. It asserts the necessity of all those boundaries and categories which the characters are heroically striving to keep up; at the same time it invests them with a wilful arbitrariness. In the final chapter, after an even thicker and more review-proof plot than we are used to expect from Iris Murdoch, Blaise complacently muses to himself:

> Later there would be a time for that, a time for all the things that had to be done so as to set the world in order again. Oddly enough, the world *could* be set in order, that Blaise knew. . . .

Well, yes, the world can be set in order, but in this case the order proceeds from a set of singularly lucky circumstances. It just happens that Blaise's wife has been killed, for no reason at all except that she happened to be on the right flight and at the right airport to get pointlessly gunned down by an Arab guerrilla. And Blaise himself just happens not to be dead, when the reader had every right to assume that he'd had his throat torn out by his wife's dogs. But things did not turn out that way, and the world can be set in order. It is this conspiracy between chance and convention which keeps the human world going, and Miss Murdoch is busily educating her characters—and us—into a proper respect and humility before the chaos on which the frail enterprise of civilisation is built. Almost everyone in her new book is haunted by atavistic dreams of a revolting animal life in which bats, pigs and blood prominently figure—another double, another mirror for her world to find itself reflected in.

THE NOVEL itself moves in a series of stately tableaux, as formal as a sequence of allegorical scenes on a painted frieze. Indeed, the characters have a habit of regarding themselves as if they knew they were acting out an allegory. The terrible arbitrary mess of life is chronicled with a novelist's as well as a moralist's regard for the importance of convention. One or two reviewers have complained of the oddly static quality of this book, but that is very much of a piece with its theme. The operatic conversation, the elaborate scene-setting, the air of something mounted or got-up, like a masque, are like the morals and manners which are the novel's subject, fragile necessities. We are, I think, supposed to feel that they are on the brink of crumbling too. The point is not to give in to those dreams and intimations of the void beneath, but to respond to the brave artifice with which people—and novels—stave off the void. Box hedges, Miss Murdoch seems to say, are very fine and desirable things, but we must remember that we make them, not they us.

More than twenty years ago in her study of Sartre, Iris Murdoch observed that one function of the novel was to preserve our discursive, "thingy" view of the world. Her own novels are amazingly rich in thinginess. It is fairly easy to

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describe the metaphysics, the theory, on which her fiction is suspended; much harder to convey their thick, bubbling surface of people and events —the human minestrone soup from which she conjures these elegant propositions. She has often been accused of having a style only one remove away from that of the women's magazine —resolutely chatty and breathless, closer in tone to gossip than to literature. There are dozens of passages in *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* which look like bad, careless writing if you take them out of context. Yet in context they assume an unexpected weight. For meaning in Iris Murdoch arises out of a subtle collusion between the inherently metaphysical and articulate arrangement of the world and the scruffy, frantic, unstylish lives of the people who live in it. The most seemingly disposable words and actions take on significance because, whether we like it or not, the world is a place where everything has meaning, and Miss Murdoch is one of its most alert exegetes. Not a consequence escapes her detective's eye; the frothy, inconsequential feel of her fiction is there to make the act of philosophical detection seem miraculous and hard-won. Just tagging along behind is a delight for the slow-minded reader.

IT IS, OF COURSE, a huge advantage for a novelist to have such an abundant sense of the intrinsically lexical nature of human activity. In the novel, one damn thing happens after another, and to make them occur at all, let alone to connect them, demands that the writer should have a decent measure of conviction in his own chain of causes and effects. So much contemporary fiction is afflicted by a kind of wittering, pathological scepticism which expresses itself in, at worst, mindless inventories of a world of unrelated objects, and, at best, shy novels which tiptoe round the world as if it was a sleeping giant, liable to be roused to fury if disturbed.

Richard Stern's *Other Men's Daughters*[2] is a sad case in point. Ten years ago, on the strength of his first two novels, *Golk* and *Europe: or Up and Down with Baggish and Schreiber*, he looked like a savage and resourceful joker, unafraid of meddling with the world or of being in bad taste. His new book is tame, well-groomed, and strenuously inoffensive. It comes worryingly close to being the thinking man's *Love Story*; a routinely ironic account of a Harvard professor's affair with a peachy Southern blonde who comes up for summer school and stays to change his life—a little. There's not a page on which Stern does not display his considerable technical accomplishments: his ear for lightly-pointed, studiedly self-aware academic dialogue; his eye for small exactitudes of place and person; his sprightly control of interior monologue which enables him to shift, most convincingly, from character to character at the turn of a paragraph. But by the end of the book I didn't feel that he had established a single particularly good reason for putting these enviable attainments to use.

The trouble is that he is so thoroughly of a piece with his characters that we are expected to take them all at their own valuations of themselves. So cultivated, so unruffled, so anxious to understand each other's motives, they move through Cambridge, as they move through the novels, like painted figurines, made out of some finer clay than flesh. With such paragons for characters, it's hard to precipitate any action more violent than conversation. The girl's father flies out from New York to the south of France when he learns (from a chance paragraph in *Newsweek*) that she has shacked up with a lecherous greybeard pointy-head when she should be studying pictures in the Louvre. But his first glimpse of Professor Merriwether disabuses him, and by nightfall the three are having dinner at Daddy's hotel:

> Cynthia wore a scarlet dress with brocade collar, Mr Ryder a navy blazer and white tie; Merriwether was slightly askew in olive turtleneck and tan polo coat . . . there was glitter, mildness, polylingual babble, and then lobster stuffed with crab meat, a *salade Niçoise*, *crêpes flambés*, showtunes of the American Thirties and floods of anecdote, Harvard, Carolina, legal and medical cases, travel stories, family jokes.

With people so well, so ironically adjusted to each other as these, there is very little to tell, except about the tan polo coat and what the lobsters were stuffed with. They are simply too urbane for fiction. When Merriwether explains to his children that he is going to be divorced from their mother because of his attachment to another man's daughter, they take it just marvellously. The only person in the book who cracks up is Merriwether's wife, and both Stern and Merriwether are helpless and puzzled in the face of her extremity. When she yells at her husband to get the hell out of the house, the novel itself winces with distaste. But then, as Merriwether diagnoses, her brightness as a graduate student never did come to much.

As a nightmare prophecy about a new breed of perfectible humans now being distilled in some laboratory off Harvard Square (Merriwether does teach physiology), *Other Men's Daughters* is rich in dark possibilities. After all, Swift's feelings about the Houyhnhnms were none too

[2] *Other Men's Daughters*. By RICHARD STERN. Hamish Hamilton, £2.50.

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clear, either, and Stern's irony has an uncertain, conceivably dangerous, depth. But the novel seems softly approving, easily shockable, oddly unwilling to follow its own insights through beyond a certain cautious point. It exudes a simple faith in the mildest of all forms of irony—the value of being able to smile wryly at your own actions, as if that alone put them beyond censure. The last lines of the book—

> "Are you ok?"
> Out of the dark. He looks up, Cynthia calling from the road. He can make out her hair holding light. "A-1," he said. "I'm on the way up."

—are ironic, but they are not ironic enough to cause anyone discomfort. Rather, they belong to the fast-growing species of sophisticated sentimentality.

AT LEAST Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying*[3] has the virtue of unabashed temerity. Passionately indiscreet and indiscriminate, it is hardly a novel at all, but a series of furious escapades, loosely tacked together as parts of Isadora Wing's unfinished quest for something called "the zipless fuck." Mrs Wing (I don't know about Mrs Jong) was a one-time graduate student in 18th-century English literature, and the book leers at Fielding, and succeeds in sounding a good deal of the time like a resurrected version of Mrs Aphra Benn. Its particular kind of liberated bawdy, its greed for experience and stentorian humour belong to a tradition of the novel for which the cultivated social ironies of 19th-century fiction have never really existed. It works on the premise that since literature is notably short of picaresque heroines—where are the female Tom Jones?—their invention requires the writer to start from scratch. *Fear of Flying* brings the history of the Women's Novel up to about 1720.

Mrs Wing, surrounded by her plane-load of psychoanalysts, bursting with her literary ambitions, ready for any adventuresome lay that might present itself, is very like one of those young men, in frock-coats and knee-breeches, setting out on the dangerous and exciting highway of Life. She has a taste ("pun intended", as she would say after that word) for outrageous puns: "One swallow doesn't make a summer, but it makes a pretty damn good nightcap." That voracious appetite—in life, as in sex, her emphasis is squarely on the gustatory—extends to language as well. When she says "Vienna. The very name is like a waltz . . ." she means, not that here is a cliché which she doesn't even recognise, but that no cliché exists which she is not manful enough to assimilate. The writing insolently mixes excellence with banality and throws the result in the reader's face, mocking him for his squeamishness.

In England, Mrs Jong has managed to enrage several of her male reviewers: Martin Amis in the *Observer* and Paul Theroux in the *New Statesman* ("this crappy novel . . .") were both driven to apoplexy by *Fear of Flying*. They were clearly galled by the prospect of this woman who, because she is a woman, seems to feel entitled to take the net down before starting the tennis game. No man could get away with quite that calculated artlessness, or blowsy innocence, so why should she? But get away with it she does. Her appalling heroine (reading the book is like being locked in a lift with a woman who tells you her life story twice over, rapes you, and stops you reaching for the Emergency button) has a crude genius for reality, its quantity rather than quality. She persuades one of her existence by brute force, and she will not be budged.

What is more, if she *is* a monster, she is botheringly close to the insatiably willing dream-girl of male fantasies and male fiction. Her obsessive, generous concern with pleasuring every male organ in (and out of) sight, her delight in winning an erection, or licking a testicle, are qualities for which heroes have been going on quests for ages. Face to face with the full-frontal Isadora in her bath on the last page, the string from her Tampax "fishing the water like a Hemingway hero", the line of male authors, from Fielding to Frank Harris and Henry Miller, might well quail in horror. But that is not what we meant at all! No, Mrs Jong might reply with some justice, that's not what you meant, but that's what you've got, and that, perhaps, is just what you deserve.

NO ONE, UNFORTUNATELY, could be much annoyed by Tom Sharpe's *Porterhouse Blue*,[4] a genial romp through an imaginary Cambridge college, complete with well-tried fictional worthies like a deaf chaplain ("Perhaps his bark is worse than his bite," said the Bursar hopefully. "Bite?" shouted the Chaplain. "But I've only just finished dinner. . . .") and a morose virgin of a graduate student called Zipser. Billed as a "Rabelaisian comedy", its closest affinities are really with *Dad's Army* and *All Gas and Gaiters*; its most noticeable loss is the absence of a studio audience to keep one chuckling when the jokes grow old and thin. Its final gag, the elevation of Scullion the cantankerous porter to the position of Master of the College, has both a simplicity and a conservatism that hold the book

[3] *Fear of Flying*. By ERICA JONG. Secker & Warburg, £2.50.
[4] *Porterhouse Blue*. By TOM SHARPE. Secker & Warburg, £2.25.

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far short of the black farce which it seems to be half-heartedly trying to become. Things it finds funny are: philistine old generals growling about socialism; deafness, gout, and strokes brought on by over-eating; the lust of senile bedders; doughty ladies of a liberal, do-gooding cast of mind; and condoms blown up like balloons. God must be in his heaven and all right with the world.

George MacBeth

The Day of The Races

for S.L.

The beautiful girls
came down from Skidmore,

rode their horses
to Saratoga,
over the fences, Mr Bond.

II
The beautiful girls
in their twill jodhpurs

tossed their curls
at the staring beaux,
over the fences, Mr Bond.

III
The gentlemen farmers
raised their glasses,

dipped their hats
to the passing women,
over the fences, Mr Bond.

IV
On the white verandahs
in rocking-chairs

the elderly ladies
watched and gossiped,
over the fences, Mr Bond.

V
The sun was shining
on painted clapboard,

and bay geldings,
and bachelor maidens,
over the fences, Mr Bond.

VI
There were shiny top-hats,
and canes polished,

and girls with skin
like the wind on the grass,
over the fences, Mr Bond.

VII
So much that happens
hurts to say it,

and gets forgotten
with cantering horses,
over the fences, Mr Bond.

VIII
So write their names
in your attic style,

and say them aloud
in the dust of hooves,
over the fences, Mr Bond.

IX
Lazy Susan,
and Buzz and Jo,

Lesley Radley,
and Belle from the farm,
over the fences, Mr Bond.

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EAST & WEST

Günter Grass' Open Letter

Attempt at a New Dialogue

DEAR PAVEL, at Bièvres, a small town near Paris, I recently attended an International Colloquium on the topic "Czechoslovakia and Socialism." And I met many of our friends there: Jiri Pelikan and Eduard Goldstücker who (together with the other Czech reform-communists) had organised the gathering.

I am writing to you for several reasons. I have been refused a visa for the CSSR and therefore cannot report personally to you and other friends; and I quite agree with many Czechoslovakian reform-communists as well as West European socialists on an attempt at a "dialogue across the frontier." The idea is to re-establish the exchange of open letters that took place at the time when the Prague Spring became a political concept and we all had such great hopes.

This much, my dear Pavel, is certain: the Prague Spring is not over and done with. Your—and my—Czech friends have not given up. Rather, they are engaged, along with the socialists of other countries, in continuing the process that was interrupted by brute force in Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Taking part in the discussions in Bièvres were not merely old socialists who suffered in Hitler's concentration camps and Stalin's prisons, but also young people (like Karel Kovanda, the last president of the Czech Students' Association). British, Italian and French communists spoke—some in agreement with the views of their Party, some in opposition to them—against the suppression of Czech reform-communism and, with this as the starting-point, of the reform of the Soviet system that has corrupted socialism and deprived it of meaning.

I don't want to raise exaggerated expectations. There were no brilliant meetings that hit the

THE STORY *up till now: the previous correspondence referred to between the West-German novelist and the Czechoslovak playwright, Pavel Kohout, took place during 1967–68, the exciting days of the Prague Spring and the attempt of so-called Reform-Communists to give socialism a "human face" after decades of planned poverty and police-state terror.*

Grass (like many of the rest of us) shared the hopes but remained sober and sceptical. Kohout, a loyal Communist and a still enthusiastic Marxist, revealed—alas—all the pride that goeth before a fall. Nothing was fundamentally wrong with Marxism-Leninism. Stalin was only the product of capitalist encirclement. Only one Party was really needed to show the way. The West's parliamentary democracy was a fraud which could produce no results—but the East's Revolution, now that it was purifying itself, remained the hope of all humanity.

I once listened to an evening-long discussion between Grass and Kohout, and I wondered whether, for all the polite fraternity of "comrades in socialism", they both understood how profoundly they were talking past each other. Grass tried patiently and vainly to explain how central the idea of civil liberties must be—not only for the writer, but for the worker, for the entire citizenry—in the ideal of a fair and just society. He underscored the totalitarian elements common to both Stalinism and Hitlerism and what a dangerous illusion it was to consider the men of the Kremlin as "friends, allies, brothers."

Kohout—like Eduard Goldstücker and so many of the other Czech reformers who were clinging desperately to their life-long Party loyalties—remained adamant in his ideology. "It seems to me that my participation in this struggle", Kohout said, "is less Utopian than your striving for decency and effectiveness in parliamentary democracy." "Freedom is an irrational concept," he argued. "I'm a Marxist. For me freedom is limited by acknowledged necessity. . . ." He couldn't quite grasp the point —not yet—that was being put to him: reform the revolution, by all means, but every small step along the way has to be informed by rational conceptions of liberty, tolerance, and a pluralistic social order. The awakening came later.

At the moment Pavel Kohout is under house arrest in Prague. Since his recent open statement of solidarity with Solzhenitsyn, he has been prevented from writing and publishing. In a recent telephone conversation Kohout bemoaned the fact that "some 193 years after the Hapsburg Emperor Josef II abolished serfdom in Bohemia, we still can't move about like free men. . . ."

M.J.L.

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headlines. Sixty to seventy socialists crowded into a dilapidated small-town cultural centre, fully aware of the ignorance that prevails both in the East and the West. You know how stubbornly the New Left in the West has dismissed the Czech experiment in reform, and how persistently the international guild of the one-eyed—on the Left or on the Right—has refused up to the present to face up to the collaboration between American and Soviet imperialism.

In Bièvres I advanced for discussion seven theses concerning democratic socialism. And since I should be glad to hear your own views, and perhaps those of other Czech socialists, I will pass them on to you in the hope of receiving a reply.

It was not merely that Czechoslovakia was occupied by the armies of the Warsaw Pact powers, but we witnessed how the first attempt to reform Soviet state communism from within was forcibly halted. To be sure, suppression succeeded in the old familiar manner; but, as it turned out, the damage extended beyond the borders of Czechoslovakia. In the first place, the Soviet Union deprived itself of the only chance of radically altering the erroneous path of development its system had embarked upon.

The attempt to correct the undemocratic structure and the central autocracy of the Party hierarchy is as old as the Soviet Union itself. Rosa Luxemburg and the Austro-Marxists were the first to issue a warning against the lack of tolerance towards differing opinions, against the danger of bureaucracy, and against Lenin's terrorist methods, all of which were bound to lead to counter-terrorism and were incompatible with a liberating, libertarian socialism.

These warnings were either not heard or were foolishly brushed aside. When, three years after the October Revolution, the workers and sailors of Petrograd and Kronstadt rebelled against the autocracy of the Party élite, against the disenfranchisement of the workers and soldiers councils and the increasing centralist bureaucracy, their revolt was ruthlessly put down by Lenin and Trotsky, that is to say, by the same people whom these workers and sailors had helped to power three years earlier by revolutionary action. What was falsely described by official Party historians as "counter-revolution" in Petrograd and Kronstadt was repeated after Stalin's death in 1953 in several cities of the Eastern bloc, and finally—following suppression of the attempt at reform in the CSSR—in December 1970 in the Polish seaports.

The demands of the rebellious socialist workers remain the same. They want a grass-roots socialism. They are opposed to the transformation of private capitalism into an equally uncontrolled state capitalism. They want to solve their conflicts with the aid of independent trade unions. They want to have a say in events and not to be regimented.

These—to put it bluntly—primordial social-democratic demands have been disparaged as revisionist heresies, with appeals to Marx as authority. In reality, however, this attitude is derived from Lenin and contradicts Marx. Since it was not Marxist theory, but the Dictatorship of the Party introduced by Lenin that inevitably produced Stalin and his methods, it is erroneous and misleading to interpret Leninism as the logical development of Marxism. From this springs my first thesis:

1. *In the light of experience, whoever is striving for democratic socialism should reject the spurious combination Marxism-Leninism and, with respect to history, speak of Leninism-Stalinism.*

The final evidence in favour of this may have been provided by Alexander Solzhenitsyn with his book *GULAG Archipelago*, for Solzhenitsyn was not expelled from the Soviet Union because he criticised Stalinism, but because he was able to prove that it was Lenin, with his centralist system, who made Stalinism possible. This fact is meanwhile beginning to dawn on Western communists too; but they are reluctant to draw the harsh conclusion that they must bid farewell not merely to Stalinism, but also to its precondition, Leninism; the Pope must remain infallible. This leads to my second thesis:

2. *Whoever is striving for democratic socialism cannot work with communists to whom the Leninist party hierarchy is still sacrosanct and who are therefore capable at any time of switching to Stalinism.*

No blissful belief in a Popular Front can resolve this insoluble contradiction. Anyone who has not yet realised that the theory of Marxism and the still older idea of libertarian socialism were falsified by Lenin into an authoritarian state capitalism—and who ignores the fact that the Leninist-Stalinist system is no longer capable of reform and, taken prisoner by its own ideology, can now only play its role imperialistically—remains blind to the fact that the Soviet Union nowadays measured itself only against the world-political empire of the U.S.A. Both world powers rest upon right-wing systems; both world powers ensure their continued existence by military force and infringement of human rights. Whether we consider the crushing of democratic socialism in Czechoslovakia more than five years ago or the destruction of Allende's elected government in Chile last year, in both cases reaction—state capitalist or private capitalist reaction—imposed its authority. Hence my third thesis:

3. *Whoever desires democratic socialism cannot*

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regard State capitalism as an alternative to private capitalism. For both power structures elude democratic control and repudiate workers' participation in the running of affairs, for reasons that are reversed mirror images of one another but ultimately come down to the same thing: they are unwilling to share power.

This double hostility and opposition helps to define democratic socialism. As an alternative to traditional private capitalism with its undertakings that are too powerful because they are removed from democratic control, and as an alternative to state capitalism with its equally uncontrolled state undertakings, democratic socialism has the task of establishing democracy and socialism as two sides of the same coin. Hence my fourth thesis:

4. *Whoever desires democratic socialism must tolerate his political adversaries, while demanding the same tolerance from them as a sine qua non of democracy. The mainspring of democracy is not the party in power, but the opposition between the parties. A society that does not permit opposition prevents alternative thinking, and is finally reduced to ideological poverty under the dogmatic domination of a party that faces no criticism and dissent and is therefore autocratic.*

Here the self-confidence of the Western European socialist, social democratic, and Left-liberal parties is in a bad way. Where they are governing, they are inhibited by the well-known vacillations of their generally liberal coalition partners. Where they are in opposition, the attempt to form a Left majority comes to grief at present on the inability of the Communist blocs to break free of the Leninist straitjacket. It may be that the Italian Communist Party will be the first to emancipate itself from Lenin's hierarchical élite structure; but whether it will be possible for the French Communist Party also to undergo this process of emancipation is doubtful. Hence my fifth thesis:

5. *Democratic socialism must be defined, controlled, and built from the bottom up; it therefore rejects the domination of a Central Committee. Its goal is a socially determined grass-roots democracy in all areas of society. It cannot remain satisfied with a merely formal concept of democracy. For the show-pieces of merely formal democracy—whether they are called free speech and freedom of the press or a freemarket economy —have demonstrated their dubious nature and refuted themselves, in so far as big corporations dominate the ostensibly free market and monopolistic publishing concerns increasingly manipulate opinion and information.*

But how, we ask ourselves, does democratic socialism define a market economy that is not only free, but also social? Can it be brought about only by means of leadership and direction

Herr Grass Upsets the Marxists

Paris

HERR GÜNTER GRASS, *the West German novelist and Social Democrat, has upset doctrinaire French Marxist left-wing intellectuals by declaring in Paris last night that more liberty exists under the fascist regimes of Spain and Portugal than in communist eastern Europe.*

Acting rather like Oscar in the Tin Drum, *Herr Grass also shocked the conventions of his audience when he remarked that the French Socialist Party ought to be very clear about, and also "reflect" on, the present alliance it has with the French Communist Party.*

Herr Grass was taking part, with other writers from France, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Romania, in a round table discussion on "Why is liberty of expression essential in a socialist country?" The writers had spent the weekend outside Paris reviewing the long-term implications of the 1968 "Prague spring" for socialism. The meeting was held in the Salle des Sociétés Savantes, one of the regular gathering places nowadays of French left-wing intellectuals.

HERR GRASS ARGUED *that the crimes committed in socialist countries under Stalinism were worse than those committed by fascist regimes, including the Nazis, as the socialists had additionally been guilty of betraying the hopes of humanity, hopes which had never been placed in the author of* Mein Kampf.

L'Humanité, *the French Communist Party daily, in a leader this morning took on Herr Grass, a friend of Chancellor Brandt. Obviously stung by his warning to the French socialists,* L'Humanité *accused Herr Grass of joining in an anti-communist "witch hunt".*

Herr Grass, who had attacked the French communists for their "ignorance, grave intolerance, but, above all, stupidity" in seeking to support the Soviet Union's official policy towards the arts, got support however from a leading French dissident communist, and the former editor of Lettres Françaises, *M. Pierre Daix. Not only was Mr Solzhenitsyn a "symbol" of that intolerance, many Soviet authors who had spoken out and been published in the sixties were now silenced.*

M. DAIX WAS JOINED *by Professor Edward Goldstücker, the former president of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union, who denounced the basic conception in the eastern European countries which made all literary endeavour an instrument of state propaganda.* THE TIMES (London)

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that is centralised, even if democratically controlled? And further: if, as has been proved, the nationalisation of big privately-owned corporations only creates new and uncontrolled corporate powers, what form of ownership is democratic socialism to strive for? Certainly, where a system of co-determination is law, the principle of equal voting rights offers for the first time the possibility of bringing private and state corporations under control; and certainly, it has been proved in practice that *control of power* is more important than its possession. Yet the alternative to private capitalist and state capitalist ownership remains an open question. Hence my sixth thesis:

6. *Democratic socialism has been defined only in broad outlines. The need for more complete definition has grown increasingly urgent since the moral bankruptcy and structural disintegration of the two world-power blocs has become evident.*

I believe that democratic socialism and its goals—its possibilities and challenges, its still vague hope—should be discussed without dogmatic stipulations, so that the Czech endeavour to give socialism "a human face" shall not sink into oblivion, but be carried forward. From this derives my last and seventh thesis:

7. *Democratic socialism is not a dogma. Since it describes no final goal and since the goals of yesterday can become hindrances tomorrow. it must continually redefine itself. Neither a blindly pragmatic muddling-through, nor excursions and evasions into Utopian realms are appropriate to it, but only a unity of theory and practice. Democratic socialism could bring about a rebirth of the European Enlightenment in its struggle against dogmatism and intolerance. It must not consider as sacrosanct either Kremlin saints or Esso idols; for democratic socialism demands a permanent revision of that which exists. The synthesis of democracy and socialism corresponds to the millennial longing of the peoples for freedom and justice. Our task must be to work at it.*

AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, my dear Pavel, although certain of these theses met with approval, they became a stumbling-block—especially for the older communists and socialists—as soon as they presupposed revision of Leninism. Who likes to question the gods of his youth?

Towards the end of the colloquium a declaration was approved pointing out the connection between the occupation of Czechoslovakia and the military coup in Chile. I know how hard it still is for many socialists to compare the crimes of Communism with those of Fascism. But is it not a fact that anyone who advocates democratic socialism should be more grieved by the suppression of human rights by Soviet communism than by the Fascist terrorism that corrupts the West in the old familiar manner?

Somehow my letter will reach you. I am sure that you, like me, feel the need to continue our dialogue across the frontiers, so that in this form others too may take part in it.

With friendly greetings,

Yours,

Günter Grass

Weltwoche (Zurich)

MARXISTS OF OUR TIME

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Letter from Berlin

By George Mikes

"Whenever I go to Berlin, it is Christopher Isherwood who sends me there, and whenever I arrive I forget Goodbye to Berlin *almost completely. That is as it should be. 'The whole idea that I was writing* about *Berlin is highly misleading', said Isherwood in* Success Story *(first of a most promising new series) and went on to tell us of the distinguished German writer whose manuscript on the last years of Weimar was recently returned by his publisher because he had failed to capture 'the spirit of Isherwood's Berlin.' Myth once more has ousted history. . . ."*
THE TIMES (*London*)

GERMANY is a country without a capital; Berlin is a capital without a country. Germany finds it easier to operate without capital than I do; and, which is more relevant in this context, finds life much easier than Berlin does.

The city has often been called "the Hong Kong of the West." An isolated outpost in an alien surrounding (refugees used to swamp it, but not any more); a showpiece of so-called Western civilisation and material success; an important and busy trading point; a city in a precarious position dependent on the goodwill of neighbours full of ill-will. One other thing. You look across the Spree as from Kowloon and you realise that you can travel around the world from Hilton to Hilton, from museum to museum, from executive lunch to directors' dinner without noticing much difference between New York and Lima, between Birmingham and Cape Town. You can travel thousands of miles and in your end is your beginning—you have pretty much the same conversation or conference with almost the same people in quite the same dull surroundings. You know perfectly well that staying at home broadens the mind, but *Wanderlust* drives you on.

I had been in Berlin on two previous occasions and had seen two utterly different cities. The first occasion was in 1952 when I was collecting material for a little book. Berlin then was still in ruins. Whole, vast areas were just heaps of rubbish, with tidy, brand new boards stuck into the debris to indicate the position of the old thoroughfares. You were standing on a pile of rubble but you were informed by the signs that that point used to be the intersection of Tiergartenallee and Fichtenstrasse. Not only Berlin but the whole of Germany was still under Allied occupation. The country was poor; the refugees and (what a horrible word for a despicable thing!) "expellees" seemed to create an insoluble problem; and there were still shortages.

Yet, the Berlin of 1952 was the happiest Berlin I have ever seen. The period was soon after the Allied airlift, and Mayor Ernst Reuter's post-Blockade Berlin was flushed with pride. Not so much with pride in achievement (the Germans were always a tough and brave people, not even their worst enemies would deny that), but they were proud of being cared for, perhaps even admired. Few great nations want to be loved; this complex never troubled the British. But the Germans share this global Venus complex, this national yearning for universal love, with the Americans; and this time, in the 1950s they had received all the love, attention, and affection they so badly needed after twelve years of Hitler, two World Wars, two defeats, and years of occupation by four Allied armies. They ranked as Hostage Number One in the world. Whenever Stalin (and later Khrushchev) wanted to apply pressure on the West, Berlin was the obvious target. The West was ready to go to war for Berlin (it was not just "Berlin for the West" but "Berlin for the Berliners"), and what could be more reassuring and flattering to the ego than to be a *casus belli*? The Germans—and Berliners—of those days worked like beavers and it was obvious that their frantic efforts and messianic zeal were leading somewhere. And there was "*die Zone*" and the Russian *Ost-Sektor* to look down upon, to hate and to pity. Sentimental and tough people like the Germans need affection; but they need even more someone to look down upon, with a mixture of sorrow and anger. So the Berlin of those days was poor but honest, endangered but curiously secure.

MY SECOND VISIT to Berlin came soon after the erection of the Wall in August 1961. The city—by then more or less rebuilt—was stunned, dumbfounded, and unhappy. The refugees streaming from the "*Zone*" had been a source of old national pride; and by then also a source of much-needed manpower. The Wall was an ugly and menacing thing. Shops and houses on the boundary were evacuated, left derelict with doors

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and windows walled in. They looked like the dark eerie ruins in a Charles Addams cartoon. But if the Wall was an outrage, it soon also became a tourist attraction. Little platforms were erected on the Western side to watch the sullen faces of the *Vopos* (the East Berlin police) and the embarrassed D.D.R. citizens. The Wall was an open wound. It seemed to be displaying itself with the anger but also with the sadistic pleasure of a deformed Eastern beggar. We, the tourists, sensed and shared a vague feeling of guilt, and enjoyed every minute of it.

As for Berlin, it was taken aback. What would this "wall of shame" do to the idea of German unity? They asked as if they already knew the hopeless answer.

I RETURNED TO BERLIN, once again, twelve years later, just about the span of Hitler's rule, and it seemed to be just as short and long a time. In 1964 (and even in 1952) I had suggested to some German politicians that all West Germans were merely playing lip-service to the idea of a German *Wiedervereinigung* but knew it was unattainable and a pipe-dream. What's more, most West Germans did not really want the poor East to drag down their hard-earned standard of living; further, the peoples of Western Europe, who also supported publicly the idea of German unity, wanted it even less. A divided Germany appeared to be one of the important safeguards of European peace. In private quite a few German politicians agreed; in public they called such views treachery. Some people suggested after 1961 that the Wall was "a blessing in disguise", and this was regarded as an even more sacrilegious view.

The more things change, the more different they become—at least in Berlin. By now the city had ceased to be Hostage Number One. No Russian invasion threatened. The division of the *Reich* had been officially accepted by both Germanies. The Wall had proved to be a blessing however ugly the disguise. By now the Pound sterling had become only a poor relation of the sterling Mark. The growing Arab threat to Europe's oil supplies emerged as an even graver threat to Berlin than the Red Army on the other side of the Brandenburg Gate. Only the Turks appeared to be working hard with Teutonic efficiency, as German foremen supervised them with benevolent and slightly amused smiles. Berlin had ceased to be an outpost, a show-piece, a potential *casus belli*, and a Western symbol. It was well on its way to becoming just another city. Well, half a city.

IS THERE a dominant mood in the Berlin air? There is little devotion to hard work, no iron determination as in 1952; but neither is there despondency and fear as in the early '60s. Ordinary week-days seem to have arrived in Berlin.

I pored over the official statistics and spoke to Berlin's official and unofficial PROs: they all ooze confidence, buoyancy, optimism. It was pointed out to me at least a dozen times that Berlin was quite the greatest town between Moscow and Paris. This is probably true. On the other hand, what *is* there between Moscow and Paris? Minsk? Bucharest? Well, there are also all the German cities as well (stately Hamburg, charming Munich, affluent Düsseldorf). But Berlin is still "the biggest", and this is followed by an impressive flow of statistics. Berlin is not only the metropolis *par excellence* but also the largest industrial city in Germany. It lost 77% of its industrial capacity after the War, yet today's Gross Domestic Product . . . and a staggering figure follows. It fails to stagger me, who am practically never staggered by Gross Domestic Product. The achievements of the food, tobacco processing, chemical, clothing, printing and other industries are equally stupefying and—we are told—Berlin's only industrial problem is the shortage of labour, especially of skilled engineers. Last year thousands of them came to Berlin from West Germany, but not enough.

One gets the impression that these people and publications are dutifully singing the praises of Berlin. But the thin melodic line is more like whistling, and whistling in the dark. Why not be frank about it? Berlin is a prostitute, a kept city, subsidised from the West by the Federal Republic. People get tax concessions, cheap credit for flats and furniture, and a dozen other favours and inducements. If young men marry Berlin girls and are prepared to stay another two or three years, they can get further cheap credit. After the first baby, 25% of the loan is regarded as paid back; the second baby wipes off another 25%; and the third baby pays off the lot. Yet where are all the babies? Berlin's remains a population of the aged.

Elderly war widows stayed in Berlin after the War while their children left for the Federal Republic. Then for a long time, Berlin used to be cheaper than the rest of Germany, consequently pensioners came to Berlin in large numbers and could live on their fixed income more economically and pleasantly than anywhere else in Germany. Today, Berlin prices have caught up with the rest, yet Berlin goes on ageing. Pensioners do not migrate to Berlin any more but many young people go West, thus upsetting the balance just as badly. Students—German and foreign—come by the tens of thousands, but they leave as soon as their studies (often only in Peter Simple's

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"Protestology") are over. It's not that Berlin is not big enough, or good enough; but there are no real "main chances" in Berlin. A young man may start on, say, a banking career in Berlin. If he wants to get on and become a regional manager, he must leave, simply because there are no real regions in a half-city. So it is that the more ambitious and the more enterprising leave. On the other hand, it is not necessarily the best who are attracted by cheap credits and tax allowances; and not necessarily the most imaginative or the most courageous who wish to pay back a mortgage by producing three babies in quick succession. "There is a negative selection at work," a disillusioned old Berliner told me, "we are becoming a city of middle-aged second-raters. . . ."

While I do not fall over backwards from looking at figures of Gross Domestic Product, I am not convinced by this second set of arguments either. Berlin may be a kept woman, but then, is that nowadays so terribly sinful? She is kept because she is deemed worthy of maintenance (and not because she can tango). Berlin has enough sophistication, culture, tradition, history, beauty, and general worth to be kept. Surely, instead of being ashamed she should be proud of it; instead of a blush and furtive movement of the hand, she should accept the offerings with a condescending smile and an aristocratic nod? Subsidy to Berlin is the homage of lesser breeds outside the wall. There are those who prefer the vices of decadence to the virtues of virility, and if they have to choose between a gracious and cultured prostitute and an upstart young executive, would opt for the lady in question.

OTHER CITIES of Germany are strikingly provincial compared with Berlin. Buoyant and bustling Munich is an essentially Bavarian *Haupstadt*, a capital but a regional capital. Hamburg is cold and has never had the air of a metropolis. Frankfurt is shapeless dullness itself, and Bonn is the *Bundesdorf*, the capital village of Germany which will never become her capital city. Berlin is still at the centre of Germany, by default. There is no capital. But young Germans do not go to Berlin like pilgrims, as young Frenchmen go to Paris; and Berlin itself is getting more and more provincial.

Berlin's newspapers are local papers. Some of them are very good sheets, but the old *Berliner Tageblatt* could not be resurrected. Germany's national papers are printed in the Federal Republic: in Hamburg, in Frankfurt, and in Munich. Not much of international—or for that matter, national—importance is happening in Berlin; and consequently foreign correspondents reside in Bonn, and stringers do the job in Berlin.

People keep pointing out to you that Berlin is still the "cultural capital" of Germany and her theatre is magnificent. Perhaps I had bad luck. I cannot judge Berlin's theatre, having seen all told two performances. One was an old French farce called the *Piggy-bank* ("*Sparschwein*") played in one of the most with-it, avant-garde theatres. Every seat was taken and the play was a roaring success for everybody except myself. Soon after I saw it, I read an encomium in London's *Financial Times*, the reviewer almost rendered speechless by sheer delight. I am afraid I found it a mediocre, old-fashioned farce, performed competently but without real distinction; and the whole thing was drawn out to four hours, a tragic length for any farce. Then I went to see a famous Berlin political cabaret in the Europa Haus. Here again, the audience—the majority seemed to be middle-aged provincial Germans, determined to enjoy themselves—laughed their heads off. But the jokes and the targets were painfully obvious old chestnuts, feeble ideas were ridden to death, and the tempo and the timing would have been regarded as a trifle slow in the Paris of the 1890s.

The wit of the streets, the taxis, the cafés, and even the West-end villas, I found livelier than the wit of the theatres. Some people maintain that the famous Berlin wit and even the gritty accent (which made the Cockney of Shaw's *Pygmalion* so easy to translate and perform) are dead. Berlin is full of Saxons, East Prussians, expellees from Czechoslovakia, *et al.*; so, they say, there are not enough Berliners in Berlin. But the spirit belongs to the place, it is a *genius loci*. Berlin has a cynical, sophisticated, self-mocking and self-confident air; I met there a larger number of truly cosmopolitan, witty and broad-minded people than elsewhere in Germany. Into my Ku'damm bus came a man with his hand in a plaster cast. "Biting your nails again?" the conductor cracked at him. A friend saw an elegant, over-dressed and over-painted lady carry a tiny dog with unbelievably long hair. A Berliner looked at her and at her dog and asked: "Excuse me, lady, but did you knit it yourself?" All this in Berlin's own jargonised cockney dialect, unchanged and quite indestructible.

IT IS NOT TRUE, as I was told, that Berlin's "only problem" is a shortage of skilled labour. Berlin has another problem: the abundance of unskilled labour. I mean, a Turkish invasion. If the Turks in the 16th century failed to reach Vienna, in the 20th they have reached Berlin *en masse*.

Germany has an enormous number of *Gastarbeiter* ("guest-workers"), as this imported,

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cheap, foreign labour is euphemistically called.[1] In Berlin they are mostly Turks, poor lost souls from Anatolia, bewildered, unskilled and without even a smattering of the language. Not only that the others (Italians and Yugoslavs, for example) are fewer in number here but they tend to return to their homelands after a few years; most of the Turks stay on in Berlin.

They settle only in certain neighbourhoods and change the atmosphere of the streets. They turn some districts into slums (which is not their fault), establish their own shops, bakeries, groceries, cafés, and put up signs—often just primitive, cardboard signs—in Turkish. They lead a life of relative poverty and apparent degradation, yet a life ten times as prosperous—even if not ten times as happy—as they used to live in Anatolia. They do not invade local German restaurants—even the cheap ones would be too expensive for them—but infiltrate cheap cafés; and once a few tables in a *Kneipe* have been taken over by Turkish regulars, the Germans keep away and the Turkish conquest is complete. One or two small areas of Berlin have a Turkish majority; some others have a sizable Turkish minority. Why is it that they create problems? They are industrious people and send a large part of their income home (whole villages in Anatolia now live on receipts from Berlin). They are quiet and reserved people, certainly not given to delinquency (their criminality is far below the German average). But, naturally enough, they need schools, hospitals and social services. Their children are born in Berlin, speak the dialect with a Berliner *Schnauze*, yet they are not fully integrated. (The municipal authorities seem to be worried that the Turks—uneducated and impressionable—may fall easy prey to Communist influence from the East. The "agitators" are evidently no figments of the imagination: they do their best.) The problem is "Nativism", a mixture of real social difficulties, well-founded personal anxieties, and general xenophobia.

BUT ONE POINT is worth making and, indeed, underlining. The German army today is the least militaristic army in Europe—recruits even join trade unions and refuse to salute their superiors unless actually on duty. Goose-stepping is dead, in fact deader than in the Communist East. And my impression is that Germany, while she has her guest-worker problems—where has the "Melting Pot" actually melted?—is today *the least racialist country* among all those facing similar problems. Less racialist than Britain *vis-à-vis* the children of the so-called Common-

[1] See Theo Sommer, "Der Gastarbeiter", ENCOUNTER, November 1973.

Dannie Abse

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wealth; less racialist than France *vis-à-vis* her Algerian sons; and more tolerant than Switzerland.

How much has changed in the relationship to East Berlin? Apparently not much. The East—as a presence, as a menace—is not uppermost in people's minds as it was after the erection of the Wall on that 13th of August 1961. West Berliners get on with their business, averting their eyes, trying to ignore East Berlin. The old platforms of the '60s are still there, and busloads of tourists still climb up and watch the sullen faces of East Berlin citizens who studiously ignore the onlookers. The watchers can still see the green uniforms of the *Vopos*, get a sniff of the nightmarish atmosphere of the spot-lighted no-man's-land near the Wall, and catch a glimpse of ferocious Alsatian dogs.

West Berlin is still affluent and still a showpiece; East Berlin is still distinctly poorer. Yet much here has changed. First of all, East Berlin, too, has become a show-piece for Eastern Europe. East Germany is now something of an industrial great power, envious of West Germany but justly proud of her own achievements. Poles (with some cash) come to East Berlin to buy shoes, clothes, and other goods, just as East Berliners would go to West Berlin if they were allowed to. It all depends on the direction one is travelling—coming from the West, East Berlin is shabby and pathetic; coming from Warsaw or Moscow, it is obviously an El Dorado.

East Germany has her own industry, army, civil services, local government; in other words, more and more people have a vested interest in her existence. As soon as life becomes at all tolerable for them, people accept or become resigned to this separate existence. And whatever western commentators may say, the late Walter Ulbricht's "Wall of Shame" has achieved its purpose. But for the *Mauer*, East Germany would have been bled white of her young people. It was the Wall that kept East Germany's educated and brawny youth at home and thus made the country's prosperity possible.

West Berliners are allowed a limited number of visits to East Berlin, and they go to visit relatives and sometimes just to satisfy their curiosity. Some are smug and pity the poor East; but the poor East does not feel completely isolated any more. The Wall is not breached yet; but it is pierced. In any case: how poor is the poor East? At the time of my last visit, East Berlin appeared to be a deeply different world. Today, I felt that the famous Friedrichstrasse and the celebrated Unter den Linden could be one of the lesser—but not the poorest—suburbs of West Berlin. Divided they are and remain, but they are not quite separate worlds any longer.

Huge placards in East Berlin invite you to "Visit Sunny Bulgaria"—but no more thrilling place. At the offices of the Egyptian Airlines war communiqués were still displayed giving lurid accounts of splendid Egyptian victories. Western Embassies are being opened. I saw long queues at an apparently very good supermarket. In the near-by bookshop, the two featured books in the window were: Gustav Husak's own account of the Czechoslovak events of 1968 and *János Kádár's Speeches, 1964–1971*. There were no queues for those two items, and I gave them a miss myself. The words *Kultur* and *Freiheit* are ubiquitous. Jobs are advertised for cleaners, porters, sweepers, "in order to enable us to fulfil our Duties to the Nation." On the day of my visit, other newspapers all over the world featured the headlines of Arab-Israeli altercations on their front pages. *All* the East German papers I saw carried huge banner-headlines, informing their readers that the Leader, Eric Honecker, had won the "Joliot Curie Prize", a Communist prize awarded by East Germany. As if they could have dared to give it to anyone else. . . .

East Berlin is still a dismal place, but there are degrees of squalor. Faces in the street are less gloomy, less frightened, indeed conspicuously more friendly than twelve years ago. The police is rarely hostile. The *Ostpolitik* and the *détente* have made an impact, and any international sporting contest proves it clearly. There is no group the Germans are so keen on beating as the teams of the Other Germany; but if they cannot beat them, they "join them", for they want *them* to win. They are, after all, *Deutsche*. Nationalism may have perished on the battlefields and may be extinct in politics; but it survives in football and in the high jump.

Not the most persistent of the PROs could "sell" Berlin to me, yet I found after a fortnight that I cared deeply about the place. First of all—isn't this always decisive?—I met a lot of people I took to. Sophisticated or cynical, witty or wise, they were people who loved Berlin not with the aggressive chest-beating of the *Lokal-patriot*, but with the self-mocking admiration of gentler, blushing lovers. And there are the women of Berlin. A special issue of *Life* magazine once demonstrated that the German *Wirtschaftswunder*—the economic miracle—had been surpassed by the *Fräuleinwunder*, the miracle of the German girls. The girls still are, on the whole, blonde and blue-eyed but the fat, bosomy *Fräulein* has long been replaced by a dieting, slim and sporting successor.

It could be that I liked Berlin because of its splendid isolation. Britain, the former land

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of isolationism *par excellence*, is becoming part of Europe; Berlin, strictly speaking, is not even part of the Federal Republic. Isolation has its dangers: it breeds arrogance and delusions, but it also breeds a certain strength, a peculiar courage, and a visible eccentricity. I find something attractive and impressive in those 2,100,000 hermits who make up the population of West Berlin.

I am also taken by the very fact that the PROs were so wrong. Berlin is not quite "a bustling, growing, industrial city"; and, in any case, '*raus mit* the Gross Domestic Product! Berlin is not a city of "the buoyant young" but of the buoyant elderly. We have so much bustle, virility, getting ahead, all over the world that I, for one, welcome and salute a little non-growth, a touch of middle age or even (as they call it in Miami) senior-citizenry. Who doesn't know that the future belongs to youth (although in the future the young themselves will become a trifle middle-aged)? who has yet to be convinced that the young are wise and omniscient? who can fail to "respect and revere" the young? But I am deeply drawn to the one city which adores youth only from a safe distance, a city with a memory, a city with a past.

And what a past! There are moments of history when a city steps out into the limelight. Athens, Rome and Carthage had their moments, long ago. Later Venice and Florence, New York and Chicago, had theirs. After the last War, Rome once again had its moment, and London too. But the 1920s belonged to Berlin, to the city of Brecht, Lotte Lenya and Kurt Weill, Marlene, Einstein, Max Reinhardt, George Grosz and Walter Gropius. True, it was also the city of street fights, unemployment, political murder, and the noise of Goebbels. Yet, Berlin gave a certain something to the world which lives on.

Berlin was also, if I may be allowed to say so, a great Hungarian city. (Why is it that the Hungarians are so successful everywhere but, invariably, make a mess of one single, small Central European country?) Berlin was the city of Gitta Alpár, the radiant star of operettas and her clique; of Oscar Dénes, the fat and jovial pop-singer, shaking with uncontrollable laughter; the city of Stefan Lóránth, the future founder of Fleet Street's *Picture Post*; of Emeric Pressburger, the British film-writer, subsequent winner of Oscars, and author of films chosen for Royal Command performances; of Paul Ábrahám, the ingenious composer of light music; of Ferenc Molnár the playwright who a quarter-of-a-century after his death is belatedly being discovered even in London. Berlin was the city of the early successes of Arthur Koestler and the early failures of Alexander Korda.

A great city; a city of glorious decadence; a metropolis of dignity; a city of a great past—but has it got a future? A friend of mine, a wise old man, an ardent but level-headed lover of Berlin, when I asked him this question, sadly shook his head:

"I am afraid not. It lacks the raw material."

"Raw material?" I asked.

"Not enough Jews. Not enough Hungarians."

To the Heart

I watched
an expert cook
he would thrust his hand
into the windpipe
pushing it through
into the sheep's
inside
and there in the quick
would grasp the heart
his fingers closing
round the heart
would rip out the heart
with one pull
yes
he certainly was an expert

Tadeusz Różewicz
translated by Adam Czerniawski

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Two of the Worlds

I.

From much handling of diapers, I am covered in warts.
From much washing of clothes, my tears have become suds.
From much sawing of wood, I have macabre dandruff.
From much counting of money, my nails have grown silver.
From much watching of TV, my spectacles have grown dark.
From much arguing with you, my teeth have grown black and my tongue chalky.
From much handling of poisons, I am covered in scales.
From much astronomical calculation, I have become a star.

II.

And these women, their blouses—
They walk in their flowers and their stripes, flourishes, mad fruits
They walk past papered like comics with all our favourite colours
Like nursery walls reminding you of the room inside each one of them

They change these blouses with their garish pages, they alter their stories,
Against the flowery paper they glide through the walls of houses

In this house she drifts, one of the honeymoon ghosts of the house
Or the happy blouse hangs over the back of the chair and she is dead or in bed.

Peter Redgrove

The Scene of the Crime

Time and again I've tried to picture it—
Verandah, the slapping boom of the canvas blind,
Sticky poinsettia sweat, the normal heat
Which piles up in the varnished rooms,
The sense of something always left behind,
When over the terrified child the wardrobe looms.

What happened here, I ask, as I walk round
The imagined space? A boy and then a man
Outwore an older man and one day found
That reticence is love: an accepted defeat
Lived on with a death, a pointless plan
Was worked out in an unimpressive street.

Soon I'll come home and open the white gate
And put my sophistication to the test;
Through travel, work and other love, my fate
Is looped to this first house of dreams;
These rooms and faces will at last find rest
When everything in me is what it seems.

Peter Porter

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LETTERS

Zaehner's "Evil"

TWO OF MANY QUESTIONS I should like to ask Professor R. C. Zaehner ["The Wickedness of Evil", ENCOUNTER, April]: (*1*) How can "Now" be "reached" ("reachable" is perhaps better put) on the relative plane of logic? (*2*) How can the man who "lives in and from the level of the Now" proceed, "with perfect logic", to act on doctrines?

CHARLES BYASS

Farnham Common

THE TWO QUESTIONS seem highly pertinent but not at all easy to answer.

1. "Now" cannot be reached on the relative plane of logic but, according to Manson, it could be *experienced* or at least simulated by heavy doses of LSD and sex. Obviously in an eternal, that is, a timeless "Now", nothing is relative and nothing is logical since "in things eternal there is no distinction between what is possible and what *is*", as Aristotle (*Physics*, 203b 30) pointed out long ago.

2. Living "in" the Now one cannot *do* anything. Living "from" the Now, one thinks of oneself as in some way representing the Now in time. The Now in time is God—what the Hindus call Brahman with attributes, as opposed to the absolute Now which is Brahman without attributes. Therefore, whatever one does is divine since in the last analysis God is the sole agent. Manson is alleged to have seen himself as the avenging Christ of the Apocalypse—that is, as the Now operating in time in a manner uniquely appropriate to Charles Manson. (No doubt St Bernard had similar ideas about the first Crusade as Pope John apparently had about Vatican II.)

R. C. ZAEHNER

All Souls College,
Oxford

PROFESSOR R. C. ZAEHNER'S *Gitā* is "Eastern mysticism" because it is Western mistranslation. The text itself is not mystical, but devotional. For instance, he renders the Sanskrit *nahankrto* (18.17) as "a state where there is no sense of 'I'." However, Srila Prabhupada, in his Macmillan edition, translates it as "not motivated by false ego." The difference is fundamental. For Srila Prabhupada, the individual identity of the soul remains after liberation. The evil to be cured is selfishness, not the self. Perfect action is serving God, not becoming God. This is more in correspondence with the text of the *Gitā* as a whole, where the personality of God, and not the impersonal Brahman, is pre-eminent.

In fact, the *Gitā* claims the Supreme Person to be the basis of Brahman (14.27). This original personality is not the religionists' ambivalent quasi-material judge, but a totally transcendental figure with no material duties or obligations. Yet he is compassionate:

> 'There is no work prescribed for me within all the three planetary systems. Nor am I in want of anything, nor have I the need to obtain anything—and yet I am engaged in work. For, if I did not engage in work, O Partha, certainly all men would follow my path." (3.22,3)

In the *Gitā*, the preliminary understanding of spiritual consciousness is that the body is not the self. Professor Zaehner has quoted some of the relevant verses, but from the mystical position, in which one jumps irrationally from "I am not the body" to "I am the Absolute One."

For example, Krishna says that the self is never the killer nor the killed. The professor takes this to mean, finally, "that you can murder to your heart's content and feel no remorse at all," not considering Krishna's insistence, elsewhere in the *Gitā*, on God's personal sanction for all activities. The resultant impression is one of intoxicating, unrestricted pride. However, these verses have been taken out of their natural environment of service of Godhead.

Here is the point: the *Gitā's* morality is one determined by God to implement his disinterested desire that all living beings serve him. It includes, then, whatever he feels is necessary to bring them to that consciousness, even though they may not estimate some of these methods as "moral." But if they want to have it all their way, what's in store for them?

Somebody like Manson, who conceived of himself as unaccountable to any superior person, was, in his extravagant selfishness, extravagantly evil. The *Gitā* rejects this insane, wanton mysticism, and reveals God as the intelligent, independent source of morality he should be. It is inevitable that his values will often be incomprehensible to the world. But, the *Gitā* suggests, if people rise above their selfishness, they'll see what he's up to.

DANIEL C. CLARK

International Society for Krishna Consciousness,
Washington, D.C.

MAY I MAKE the following comments?

1. The first sentence seems to be strictly meaningless. How can "my" *Gita* be "Eastern mysticism *because* it is Western mistranslation"? It is in fact neither.

2. If your correspondent would bother to read any of my numerous works on mysticism, he might conceivably understand that I have always made a clear distinction between the monistic type of mysticism and that concerned with the love of God. He need only refer, however casually, to the introduction to my edition of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

3. *n'āhamkrto* means literally "unegoised" which, however, seemed to me inelegant. If Mr Clark's Guru prefers to translate it as "not motivated by false ego", that is his affair. Since, however, the word "false" is not present in the Sanskrit, scholars as opposed to Gurus would put the word "false" in square brackets—a form of pedantry, maybe, but in this and similar cases a justifiable pedantry since the reader is entitled to know what the text actually

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says rather than what any particular Guru says it says.

4. As to *Bhagavad-Gītā* 14.27: before bursting into print Mr Clark might have had the courtesy to refer to my translation and commentary on this verse (OUP paperback, 1973) where he will find this point strongly emphasised.

5. "Transcendental figures with no material duties or obligations" are by definition at least as amoral as "quasi-material judges." Mr Clark's quotation scarcely shows that Krishna is compassionate. He may be, but that is not what the quotation says.

6. My point in my commentary on the *Gītā* is that the word "becoming Brahman" does *not* mean "I am the Absolute." Perhaps Mr Clark would care to consult the lengthy disquisition on this subject on pp. 287–90 of my book where the distinction between Brahman and the Lord is emphasised, perhaps *ad nauseam*.

7. I fully agree that God's "values will often be incomprehensible to the world." Even this may sometimes occur to the genuinely unselfish who will still have difficulty in seeing what God was up to in permitting the slaughter of 6,000,000 Jews by the Nazis.

Finally it might be suggested that Krishna consciousness needs to be balanced by a little Shiva consciousness if sanity is to be preserved.

R. C. ZAEHNER

On the Fantasy Left

The "Lumpenintellektuellen"

IT IS INDEED a shocking story which you have narrated ["On the Fantasy Left," ENCOUNTER, May] of a fanatical revolutionary group centred around the person of a self-deluded guru. Organised under the ambitious title of the "National Caucus of Labor Committees", a number of university students claiming to be Marxist theoreticians holding the only true key to Marx's thought degenerated in a short space of time into a group guilty of violent disruption of meetings of other groups, beatings of peaceable political opponents, and of kidnapping and torture of some of its own members struggling to free themselves from the mass psychosis that has gripped the organization. The form the psychosis takes is the collective fantasy, inspired and cultivated by the guru, that they are the selected victims of a vast conspiracy. This presumably justifies, in their eyes, the use of any measures of defence and offence.

Who are the engineers of this "conspiracy" against NCLC? Among other sinister forces cited by Committee members are, "the C.I.A., [the Soviet] K.G.B., British Intelligence [M.I.5], the New York City Police Department, the Rockefeller Family and the anthropology department at Columbia University." The alleged conspiracy operates by "brainwashing" and "programming" the followers of the Labor Committee to "invent spurious identities and assassinate their leaders" and perform a variety of degrading actions. According to Paul Montgomery, the *New York Times* reporter who studied this group with obvious care over a period of time, its members "now spend their waking hours being harangued in violent speeches studded with accusations that their enemies are forcing them to eat excrement, perform fellatio on pigs and dogs, and submit to homosexual rape. . . ." (*N.Y. Times*, 20 Jan. 1974).

The organiser and leader of the group is one Lynn Marcus (a quasi-homophone for Lenin and Marx?), whose real name is Lyndon Hermyle La Rouche, Jr. and who must have some of the charismatic force of a Charles Manson. His intellectual pretensions are much higher, however. A self-characterised "prodigy", he dropped out of Northwestern University, became a teacher at the Free University of Greenwich Village, and—surprisingly—at the New School for Social Research. There is little doubt that some of his devotees were recruited from members of his classes.

THERE ARE SEVERAL aspects of this strange phenomenon with which your readers may be unfamiliar. First, for several years individuals officially speaking for the so-called "Labor Caucus Committee" have been harassing our members of UCRA, sometimes disrupting their meetings, insulting and abusing them, and making wild and irresponsible accusations against them, both orally and in print. This has occurred in New York, Cambridge, Buffalo, Philadelphia, Baltimore and elsewhere. As of this writing, a new wave of propaganda-by-leaflet is under way at Columbia, New York University, Duke University, and several other institutions. Some of our academic members, unfamiliar with the psychopathology of sectarian extremist groups, have been puzzled by this behaviour and some have innocently assumed that in their case (as with most political groups who misunderstand or disagree with the programme and activities of UCRA) public discussion and debate will serve a genuinely educational function. The willingness of numerous student publications to print letters and articles from the desks of the "Labor Caucus" have further reinforced the view that debates demanded by extremists may serve constructive purposes.

The irrationality of the group has by now become quite apparent. All this brings most dramatically to the fore a growing problem—how to maintain and encourage within an academic setting the greatest degree of openness and uninhibited intellectual exchange and yet avoid lending the aura of seriousness

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and respectability to individuals or groups driven by psychological aberrations, like the Berkeley group, or even bent on extreme forms of criminal violence. A great deal of background knowledge must enter the requisite analysis leading to a delicate and balanced judgment. To engage or not to engage in public debate is a decision which even under the most normal of circumstances is often not so easy to make. Now, in the wake of deep educational dislocations of the past few years, it may even be useful for members of the UCRA, before accepting challenges of debate from members of this or other similar sects to assure themselves of the psychological stability of their challengers!

Another interesting question raised by the activities of this organisation bears on the criterion of selection in staffing institutions of higher learning. The right to intellectual heresy must be preserved at all costs if one wants to maintain the climate for free and productive inquiry. But what if a teacher abuses his position in the classroom to recruit students for purposes unrelated to instruction? It is currently considered a violation of the ethics of teaching to proselytise for a religion in a classroom. Is not proselytisation for membership in a political party or group, major or minor, equally objectionable? Or does everything go?

FINALLY, one must protest at the assumption that apparently some commentators make in trying to explain why students have been ensnared by the political "obsanity" of the Lynn Marcuses of this world. This assumption is implicit in the paragraph with which the reporter in the *New York Times* concludes his report:

> "The other day two people who had left the Labor Committee and were speaking harshly of it were asked how they could have stayed so long in a movement they considered corrupted. One thought for a while and said: 'Because we had no place to go.' "

Home Thoughts from the Absurd

THE TRAMP *says: look how empty the world is. I have nothing to do.*

I WENT *to a theatre. The play said: life is meaningless, pointless, absurd. The woman in front of me had a heart attack. The actors stopped and appealed for a doctor.*

THE STUDENT *is told to be in the classroom at nine o'clock at which time he will learn something to his advantage. At nine o'clock he goes to the classroom. The teacher sits behind the desk but refuses to say anything.*

The student is bored, amused, angry. He argues with the other students. He asks the teacher questions, pleads with him, abuses him. The teacher still says nothing.

Afterwards, the teacher says: I confronted you with the reality of your situation.

The student says: you tricked me.

ART *is a way of getting out of the house.*

The artist's dream: to possess the child's vision without having to endure the child's presence.

JUST AFTER LEAVING *university I met J. He introduced me to the Absurd, showed me round the Kingdom of Ubu.*

J. had some of the Pataphysical stuff—nonsense drawings, nonsense writings. I couldn't make much of them.

As we skimmed through them, I sneaked a look at J. His eyes were shining with the delight of a small boy crowing over dirty pictures.

WE ARE *all sick. Who's granting the medical degrees?*

We are all guilty. In that case the jury must be prejudiced. I demand a retrial.

ONLY *the tired businessman goes to the theatre for moral instruction. The rest of us go to be taken out of ourselves.*

IF PROPERTY *is theft, the burglar is a receiver of stolen goods.*

ONCE ART *told us how to live with our wives.*
Then art told us how to leave our wives.
Now art says we should never have got married.

PEOPLE FLEE *family life not because it is so false, but because it is so real; not because it is too empty, but because it is too full.*

WHY DID *Sam Beckett join the Resistance?*

THE MANAGER *tells his team: your play is too constipated, sclerotic—you must simplify, cut out this wasteful dribbling and short passing, don't kick the ball so often.*

The players kick the ball less and less. Finally, they refuse to kick the ball at all. They lose every match.

The manager says: you mustn't take me so literally.

MUCK THE RAKER *thinks: why didn't Sam Beckett get married?*

The educated public says: you must not ask such questions, Beckett is an artist.

Muck the Raker says: I must not ask such questions, Beckett is a man—and could hit me.

THE MYTH *of Sisyphus is that he had done nothing wrong.*

Ferdinand Mount

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This reply may reflect correctly the abject state of those ensnared by Mr Marcus, but it does not describe accurately the objective state of their environment.

There are plenty of places to go in the political life of the country! For example, thousands of young men and women joined ecological movements, public interest groups and internships in various public and private organisations. They have also participated in great numbers in political campaigns of every shade of political persuasion and have rung doorbells for many worthy causes. There exist numerous traditional and not-so-traditional political groups of non-Marxist orientation which in the light of the grim *dénouement* of Marxism in the Soviet Union and China can make a strong claim to the allegiance of idealistic and intelligent youth. Finally, there are Marxist groups that cannot plausibly be associated with "the obsanities" of the Labor Caucus and their congeners. Marx himself was scornful of the *Lumpenproletariat* and the *Lumpenintellektuellen* of his time as well as of those who made fetish of violence. Since he and many of those whom he has influenced were able to complete their studies, is it too much to expect from Marx's present-day followers to complete their studies before they go anywhere?

At any rate, no one informed of the alternatives open to the youth of America can plead with any justification that the unhappy events which brought to the brink of disaster many young men and women, occurred merely for want of diverse, worthwhile, and even appealing opportunities. Human beings are more than a product of their environment. They contribute significantly to the clarity of their own destiny, and have, in the process, to bear a significant measure of responsibility.

SIDNEY HOOK
M. M. TODOROVICH

"Measure",
University Centers for Rational Alternatives,
New York

Walker's "Exorcist"

ALEXANDER WALKER was very down on *The Exorcist* in his article "Beyond the Excremental Cinema" [ENCOUNTER, May], and we found it a much more serious and interesting film than he said. Maybe this is because one of us is a woman, but nevertheless on all grounds we should have thought that it was worth looking at the film quite closely to see what it is actually about, and not just assuming that because the public packs the cinema it must be doing so in order to defile itself.

We thought it was quite evident that the film begins by describing the forces that were bearing down on the young to-be-possessed girl, Regan. A hostile and hysterical mother, divorced absconded father, middle-class affluence, a household where all must be pleasant and in order, a household of surface love. As Laing implies, the family is the patient, not the patient. A girl might very well have a nervous breakdown in these circumstances, and what is a breakdown but a *possession by answers to a situation which cannot be spoken in the ordinary way.*

As this film is a fiction and not a documentary, the makers enhance conventional reality and allow the girl to be "possessed" instead of nervous. In other words she shamanises. Her situation has become too urgent for mere breakdowns. The inhumanity of the medical machines which scrutinise her is stressed in the film, in the same manner as the self-absorption of the priests engaged in their archaic Mass is underlined. And Regan shamanises answers. All the manifestations of the "demon" are answers to her situation, in the same manner as a dream in a stressed situation may offer an answer to that stress.

LOOKED AT IN THIS WAY, *The Exorcist* makes good individual and social sense. Shamanic trances always give answers that are shatteringly direct. There is no man in this loveless household: the "demon's" answer to this, its first words, is an unqualified "fuck me!" The wife Chris is a grim inhibited divorcée: the manifestations or advice to her include a flaming candle and a shaking bed. There is a remote hypnotising psychiatrist: the demon gives his genitals a good savage squeeze to remind him that he is, or should be, more than just a talking head. The priests, eating and drinking Christ among caressing whispers, are vomited at: understanding and an answering energy are needed here, not convention and ritual. They are offered an epiphany which they choose to ignore, as well, and die shortly after, congested with themselves: they are shown Regan levitating as though pinned to an invisible cross, her eyes rolled up so as to make two moon-like globes: a woman crucified. The power of the name of their man-god has no power over this showing; however often they repeat the name Jesus Christ, the goddess goes down in her own time.

Then, why the name Regan, an unusual name much insisted upon? We thought of *King Lear* ("I should answer/ From a full-flowing stomach" V,iii, 75); and seeing that most published accounts of poltergeists and possession involved young girls, we no longer wondered that the crucifix that Regan was probing herself with was blood-boltered. This strong little fable thereupon took on another dimension. We could see and feel that it was the drama of desperation of a menarche, a puberty that had no means of expressing in this domestic milieu its new-developed womanhood, and went to hell in the process. We remembered the terrible reason why the Rev. Chad Vara started the Samaritans. It was, we read, because he had attended the inquest of a young girl who had killed herself at the start of her first period: not knowing what it was, she believed she had caught V.D. Her parents too must have been in a terrifying state to have been so ashamed of their bodies as not to have told the child what she might expect of her developing body. In exorcisms, the name of the presiding demon is all-important—know that and you know all. The demon true to form did reveal its name in the film of *The Exorcist*: it was NOMAN.

EVERY ONE OF THE MANIFESTATIONS reads out quite naturally and cogently once one sees this is no mere horror-film. Surely it is plain enough what organ the writing on the belly-wall refers to (and students of anatomy will have observed that the uterus, with its

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London

SYMBOLIC LOGIC: Was it perhaps symbolic of something that in the 2000 Guineas, which I happened to be watching on ITV while waiting for the Cup Final, there was a horse called Wittgenstein, who not only proved beyond the two commentators' powers of pronunciation, but also came last?

THE TIMES

London

HOTBEDTIME STORY: *The Russians have slapped a ban on the Prospect Theatre's controversial production of "Pericles", in which Shakespeare's action has been rearranged to bring the notorious brothel scene to the beginning and continue in a series of flashbacks.*

Audiences might be shocked, the Soviet authorities have told the Theatre, which last night began a three-week tour of the country—the first British company to do so since 1968. Only a "dress rehearsal" of the play will be allowed in Moscow before a selected audience of drama students.

The production by Toby Robertson has male actors in "drag" playing the prostitutes and their madam. The general air of stage debauchery is emphasised with extras lolling on cushions, hiding behind dark glasses and smoking cigarettes in long holders.

Apparently, representatives of the Ministry of Culture saw the production—using singers, dancers, and acrobats as well as actors—in the Round House in London and then expressed the view that it was "too difficult for Russian audiences to understand."

Shakespeare had a taste for the bawdy, and this has caused trouble in the hotbed of Communism. The Soviet authorities—Cultural Commissar Bowdlerevski?—have discouraged a British production of "Pericles" because of brothel scenes. They menace all Europe with the mightiest armaments ever amassed; they heave some of their most noble and gifted citizens into madhouses without cause—but they draw the line at anything really unpleasant. Shakespeare, timeless chronicler of hypocrisy, baseness and good, would not be surprised.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Berkeley, California

GOBBLEDYGOOK: A group of English teachers and professors say that the nation faces a "gobbledygook crisis." That observation was made at the University of California during a conference on Public Doublespeak. For two years, the group has kept track of linguistic manipulations by politicians, advertisers and others who try to hide behind language.

The conference found fault with such words and phrases as "combat emplacement displacers," the Pentagon's jargon for a shovel; "incursion" instead of invasion; and "protective reaction" instead of "attacking first."

NEW YORK TIMES

London

PARLEZ-VOUS FRANGLAIS?: *May I [William Pickles writes] call attention to a point that is certainly of interest to linguists and may also interest political scientists? With the rise of the popularity of football in France, the English word "score" became a common part of French sporting vocabulary. Soon after, it passed into the vocabulary of politics to describe what in English, until about a fortnight ago, was the "vote" or "poll" of a political candidate. In the past fortnight, all the British correspondents in Paris, who take to the English half of* franglais *as ducks do to water (with many consequent failures of communication), have written of the "scores" of the French Presidential candidates, and your second leader today uses "scored" as a verb in the same context.*

All this is an example of what Michel Bréal, inventor of the study now widely known as "semantics", called "loss of differentiation of meaning". Such losses are always regrettable. ("Hopefully", for hoffentlich, *another recent invasion which you too have embraced, is even more dangerously destructive of understanding.) But these things happen and when they can be caught on the wing they are worth recording. OED please note.*

THE TIMES

Miami

MISSPELLING BOOK: Someone in Dade County's school system goes to the bottom of the class, with a red face. The system's new telephone directory misspells elementary—as "elementry"—167 times.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

REWRITE MEN: *The English Church is full of priests who keep telling us that the liturgy and the Bible have to be modernised since otherwise they will not be comprehensible to the public. I will not repeat [Robert Conquest writes] all the arguments about the old liturgy. Still, let us note in passing how curious it is that no one seems to find it necessary similarly to rewrite Shakespeare—a rather earlier writer—in modern terms to make him comprehensible to the modern audience.*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

THESE BONES LIVE: Penguin Books has just published *The Way of the Sufi* by Idries Shah.

As it stands the blurb refers to "the philosophers who breathed life into the dry bones of Islam". The author has drawn our attention [the Editor of Penguin writes] to the potentially offensive nature of this phrase and wishes to make clear that he dissociates himself entirely from its sense and implications.

Penguins regret both using the phrase and the possible offence that it may give. We shall make an appropriate emendation as soon as the book reprints.

TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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ligamenta lata and Fallopian tubes is winged like a devil's body, or, if you prefer it, horned like a devil's head). The head rotating through 360° is a most immediate and terrifying image (it is only dead religion that merely soothes). But is it so recondite an image as merely to be shocking? Everybody knows of Janus, the double-faced god of the turning year, even if they haven't read Arthur Koestler on Janus-faced holons; and there are many monuments in England, on doorways and wells, depicting this famous guardian of thresholds, sometimes called Dianus, and originally a goddess. It is exactly for want of a threshold guardian among the elders, and for want of rites of passage, that our heroine Regan has to provide these essentials for herself out of her turbulent and gifted nature. Which makes the fable a satire, since the family ignores, and the little girl forgets, the nature and lessons of her disturbance: a frequent happening in modern life, when the doctor turns out to know nothing, and keeps the trouble down with massive doses of drugs. We daresay Regan ended up on Librium for life.

Interestingly, you printed Mr Walker's article opposite Peter Redgrove's little poem "At the Surgery" which says, in effect, "it's no use telling these doctors anything interesting." They simply boil up a tube of urine, which was a spell against witchcraft long before diabetes or Fehling's solution were even thought of.

Thomas Szasz provides thorough documentation in *The Manufacture of Madness* of the persecution by the conventional-in-power of *the Other*—

Poems by Children . . .

COMPARE *the two pieces of poetic writing that follow and then answer these questions: What nationality are the authors? What are their ages? What can we learn from their compositions?*

EXAMPLE A: **I understand what war is. I was very sad because we slept in shelters and I could not go out into the sunshine. I could not forget the terrible thoughts I had. When I fell asleep at night, I cried. And I cried again in my sleep because I dreamed about the war.**

In the morning when I awoke, I looked out of the shelter but I could see no cat, no dog. I realised that they were as afraid as I was. That is how I first understood the meaning of war.

When I was young I did not know what war meant.

EXAMPLE B:

Trouble everywhere.
Blood.
Everything turning wild.
People like wild animals.
Explosions.
Never caring.
Fire and smoke turning, twirling in the sky.
Frightened people, shouting, crying for help.
Injured, scarred for life.

Both have been written by children. Both authors are girls. Both are only eight years old. Both are having to share a war.

EXAMPLE A *was written by an Israeli child, squatting in a lonely shelter during the Yom Kippur war at Qiryat Shemona where 18 people, eight of them children, were massacred recently by Arab marauders.*

Example B comes from the pen of a girl in a Belfast primary school, its walls riddled with bullets, its playground covered in rubble and broken glass.

The fact that one child is Jewish, the other Roman Catholic makes little difference. Both have been forced to grow old too young.

I HAVE JUST RETURNED *from visits to Israel and Northern Ireland, two countries ravaged by different conflicts. Yet I found a remarkable contrast between the two.*

Despite the underlying fear expressed in the Israeli child's essay, there is a calmness that smacks of orange groves, and gentle olives, whereas the Belfast poem reflects the chaos and cacophony of a nation split by vicious terrorism.

A great deal of poetry has come out of the 1967 and 1973 Middle East wars, yet almost none of it evokes the horror seen and felt in the writings of Ulster children. In a satchel left on a Belfast bus, British soldiers found, not the bombs they had expected, but a set of explosive essays written by a 10-year-old boy. In one, he confessed to having "shopped my sister" and "shot a Prod" (Protestant).

HERE IS ANOTHER POEM, *from the pen of a Belfast secondary schoolboy, Jimmy Lane, aged 14. It cries for blood, restitution and retribution:*

A young child shouts "Where's daddy?"
His mother breaks down and cries.
"Your daddy's gone, he won't be back,
They're taking him away in a long brown box.
He gave his life for a cause.
When you grow up son shout his name in triumph, not in shame.
Your daddy died so we could live."
"But why mummy, why did he go?"
"In a pool of blood they left him to die,
Leaving us here to cry.
When you grow up son,
You're going to revenge his name."
"But why Mummy, why?"

Whether Jimmy Lane is Catholic or Protestant is irrelevant. Poems of this nature abound in both camps. They show the utter futility, the hopelessness of reconciliation attempts.

Compare it with the following poem, again translated from the Hebrew, by Armon Gesalkar, aged 9.

Why are there wars?
Is it not possible to have peace between Arabs and Jews?
I know Jews and Arabs are brothers,
the sons of one father.
Why must brothers behave in this way?
Why must there be wars?
Why?

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including accounts of exorcism and possession which are remarkable in that the kind of language used for the indictment of witches resembles very closely the diagnostic language of present-day psychiatrists. We cannot avoid the fact that Pauline Christianity is against the body, and against the feminine spirit, and always has been, and has always persecuted these things. The goddesses of the early religion become the demons of the supplanting religion, and the persecuted thing turns ugly and desperate under that persecution, which gives added reasons for persecuting it. Blake in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* spoke of natural joy thus: "As I was walking among the fires of hell, delighted with the enjoyments of Genius, which to Angels look like torment and insanity. . . ."

In short, we find *The Exorcist* a powerful and important little fable, and we are not surprised that the public flock to the film and devour the book. They speak of the re-emergence of forces which have been too long neglected. The powers that are invoked in the film are indeed anti-patriarchal, but not necessarily on that account evil, except in so far as propaganda has made them so—which is the very theme of the story.

PETER REDGROVE
PENELOPE SHUTTLE

Cornwall

at War . . .

Or again, there is the single-sentence "essay" of an 11-year-old Israeli immigrant boy. It says quite simply: "We won, but we don't want any more wars."

THE DIFFERENCE LIES, *perhaps, in the school teaching of Israeli and Ulster children. In Israel, teachers go out of their way to explain to pupils that wars are started by politicians, a handful of men with hatred and ambition burning in their hearts.*

The people made to fight do not want to kill or be killed, say the teachers (many of them in uniform, fresh back from the Golan or the West Bank of Suez). And they tell the children: "Do not hate those who are called the enemy. Pray instead for a lasting peace."

In Northern Ireland it is different. Teachers do not preach hatred—indeed, many, whether Protestant or Catholic, would welcome integration. But they are too nervous to come out with any "love thy neighbour" philosophy in class.

Segregation has widened the gulf between the warring factions. Catholic and Protestant children are rarely given the chance to mix. Only the essays, poetry and paintings they produce share the same hopelessness, the same fear.

The enemy in Northern Ireland is all around but rarely seen. At least the Israeli child knows that the enemy, though never far away, is across the border.

The Israeli still lives in the hope of an eventual peace.

What hopes does the Ulster child have? With his ears grown used to the noise of bullets and bombs and ambulance sirens—his eyes now accustomed to burning buses and debris and his nostrils used to the pungent stench of smoke, his hopes are perhaps summed up by the last two lines of a poem by an 11-year-old Belfast boy:

I only wish that one day it would cease
Then maybe one day we'll have peace.

John Izbicki
in THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

Alexander Walker Replies

ALL RIGHT, so let *me* tell you what *The Exorcist* is really all about, since none of us believes it is actually about an exorcism.

It is a screenwriter's allegory about film-making, which the author-producer William Peter Blatty sees as sheer hell. Under the surface events, he's crying out to us, a great submerged call of agony, to show us all the ills that can befall the creative writer and his precious brain-child of a script, while trying to keep both of them pure and protect them from all the diabolical forces that are to be found in any Hollywood film-studio which wants to possess a writer's idea, pervert and transmogrify it beyond his recognition.

"Film is an industry," Blatty is quoted as saying, "in which writers are either broken or wind up senselessly murdering strangers in the streets." Which is almost exactly a paraphrase of what the possessed child in the film does—she is "broken" and at the same time her "evil spirit" tosses two strangers (the character of the film director in the film, and the young priest) through the bedroom window, out into the street.

Be sure that any film which seems to be about one subject, but also tells us about people engaged in the film industry, is actually using the former to explore the latter. The film folk in *The Exorcist* are viewed with venomous distaste—a screen-writer's distaste. The mother of Regan, a movie actress, is an over-moneyed bitch, selfish to the degree that only pampered international movie actresses can be. The director of the film-within-the-film—it is called *Crash Course*, which is a good title for an exorcism, is it not?—is a drunken bully who openly disparages film script-writers. And the character of the detective is also an obsessive film fan who comes nosing about the "closed set" of the child's sick-room to pick up the dirt on the "stars." The only nice trustworthy people in the film are the two priests, the younger one also a psychiatrist, the elder one an archaeologist. It's they who deliver the child from all the ills that flesh —or film-writers—are heir to. And what do you think that William Peter Blatty, formerly publicity director for Loyola University, Los Angeles, and winner of an award for a TV play written for the Paulist Fathers' "Insight" series—what do you think Mr. Blatty wanted to be when he was a youngster? He wanted to be an archaeologist or a psychiatrist. . . .

Now, any advance on *this* theory?

ALEXANDER WALKER

London

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Koestler's Life

I AM WRITING a biographical and critical study of Arthur Koestler, whose own autobiography ends with his arrival in England in 1940 and who does not intend to write any further works of autobiography or memoirs. Koestler has given me unrestricted access to his papers and is providing me with all biographical and other information lodged in his memory as well as in his files. In my account of his life and work to date, I have *carte blanche*. Koestler has also agreed that I may freely seek, without his supervision or veto, the help of any who know or have known him, and who may have papers of one sort or another bearing on any aspect of his life and work. I should be grateful to hear from any ENCOUNTER reader anywhere who has anything to say or show. All letters will be promptly acknowledged, and any papers enclosed copied and returned with thanks.

IAIN HAMILTON

c/o Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd
14 Carlisle Street
London W1

Hanns Johst's Revolver

I TRUST that Mr Peregrine Worsthorne is so professional a writer and so disciplined an intellectual that he won't be moved to obscenity if I call attention to an error in his excellent recent article on Lord Longford's campaign against pornography [ENCOUNTER, May 1973].

The author of that much-quoted and much misattributed remark about reaching for one's revolver at the sound of the word culture was not, of course, Goering—or Goebbels or Hitler *et al.*—but Hanns Johst. (It can be found in his play about Schlageter.)

JAMES P. O'DONNELL

Berlin

AUTHORS

Nadine Gordimer's new novel, *The Conservationist*, from which her ENCOUNTER story is an extract, will be published at the end of October by Jonathan Cape at £2.75. . . .

Leszek Kolakowski was dismissed from his Chair of Philosophy at Warsaw University in 1968, during a wave of cultural and academic repression; he is now a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. His *Marxism and Beyond* was published by Pall Mall Press in 1969, and *The Devil and Scripture* by Oxford University Press in 1973. His article was originally delivered as a paper in March 1972 at a conference on "The Future of Religion: The Religion of the Future?" held in the Faculty of Theology, Nijmegen University, the Netherlands. . . .

Jan Morris's autobiography, *Conundrum*, has recently been published by Faber. *Heaven's Command*, the second volume of a trilogy on the Victorian Empire (written under the name of James Morris), appeared last autumn. She is a regular contributor to ENCOUNTER, and recent articles include "A View of the Royal Navy" (March 1973) and "Black Thoughts from the Caribbean" (April 1973). . . .

Kenneth Minogue is Reader in Political Science at the London School of Economics. He is the author of *Nationalism* (1967) and *The Concept of a University* (Weidenfeld, 1972). . . .

Marcus Cunliffe is Professor of American Studies, University of Sussex. His most recent book, *The Age of Expansion*, has just been published by Weidenfeld. . . .

Gillian Tindall's biography of George Gissing, *The Born Exile*, was published by Maurice Temple Smith earlier this year. Her fifth novel, *Fly Away Home*, won the 1972 Somerset Maugham Award. She is grateful to the Editor of the *Evening Standard* (London) for permission to reproduce various paragraphs in her article. . . .

Maurice Cranston is Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics. . . .

Peter Conrad is a Student of Christ Church, Oxford. His examination of the Victorian age, *The Victorian Treasure House*, was published by Collins in 1973. . . .

Alan Brownjohn is a lecturer at the Battersea College of Education in London. His latest volume of poems is *Warrior's Career* (Macmillan). . . .

Laurence Lerner is Professor of English at the University of Sussex. His most recent book, *The Uses of Nostalgia* (Chatto & Windus), is a study of pastoral poetry. . . .

Philip Brockbank is Professor of English at the University of York. He has recently completed an edition of *Coriolanus* for Methuen's New Arden series, and is working on studies of Shakespeare's histories and last plays. . . .

Eric Homberger is a lecturer in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia. His *Ezra Pound: The Critical Heritage* was published by Routledge in 1973. . . .

Jonathan Raban is the regular fiction reviewer for ENCOUNTER. His *Soft City* was published this spring by Hamish Hamilton. . . .

George Mikes, author of *How to be an Alien*, made an earlier visit to Berlin to collect material for his *Uber Alles* (1953). Since then he has published numerous books, of which a novel, *The Spy Who Died of Boredom* (André Deutsch, 1973), is the most recent. . . .

AN AMERICAN TRILOGY

Lines On The Death Of A Fisherman

Three Jews in a Tub

Dreamship

Three novels by J. Inchardi
$10 each novel, post free.

Sirius Books, P.O. Box 177,
Freeport, Maine, USA 04032.

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Thank you, Dr Bettelheim

"THE REASONS for reading magazines are many and various. Some one reads to 'keep up' with one's profession, mostly to demonstrate to oneself that nothing much new and worthwhile is taking place. Others, usually of a more general nature, one reads because the articles published confirm to one's own biases, and hence make excellent sense. But since these articles reflect one's own viewpoints, besides the pleasure that some other intelligent people think as one does—they must be very intelligent and knowledgeable, how else could they write the way one thinks oneself?—one learns nothing from them that one has not known a long time. Maybe occasionally there is a new twist to an old story, but that's all. Then, if one is conscientious, one reads some magazines which represent views opposite to one's own because one fools oneself into believing that one desires to be kept abreast of what one's opponents think; though the real reason is to enjoy how stupid they really are.

Then there are some magazines of a general cultural nature; *Horizon*, which unfortunately folded quite some time ago, for example, or the *Partisan Review* for a few early years but no longer, the contents of which enlighten and stimulate one's own thinking at the same time. Of the few magazines of this nature which still continue to be published, most have a serious flaw: when an article appears in them dealing with one's own speciality one realises that this article by no means is up to serious critical standards. This then makes one doubtful in retrospect about all the other articles in other fields which one has read and which have impressed one favourably. One questions whether this positive impression was only due to lack of adequate knowledge of the field which they dealt with.

Over many years it has been only ENCOUNTER which did not force me to doubt the favourable impression the articles I have read in it created; the reason for this was that those articles addressed to issues which were my speciality came up to the most critical standards which I applied in reading them. Not that I necessarily agreed with what was written, But it was fresh, intelligent, stimulating and—a rarity—enjoyable reading, well thought out. If it would not be so hackneyed an expression, I would say these articles dealing with my speciality, even if I did not agree with the viewpoint, nevertheless managed to make a real contribution to my thinking. This, then, gives me the comfortable feeling that the many other articles I read in ENCOUNTER in fields where I am much less at home and which impressed me and enlightened me probably were as trustworthy as those where I was well familiar with the topic.

Saying this may seem small praise. But since ENCOUNTER is off-hand the only magazine where I feel this way, and which I therefore enjoy reading regularly without feeling I am wasting much of the time spent on it, I cannot think of any higher praise for those who publish and edit it."

Sincerely,

Bruno Bettelheim

DR BRUNO BETTELHEIM was, until recently, Professor of psychology and psychiatry at the University of Chicago and head of the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School there. Among his books are two scientific studies on the treatment and rehabilitation of emotionally disturbed children. *Love is Not Enough* (1950) and *Truants from Life* (1955). A more general work of social analysis was published in 1960 under the title, *The Informed Heart: Autonomy in a Mass Age*. His latest books are *Children of the Dream* (1969) and *A Home for the Heart* (just published by Thames and Hudson). Dr Bettelheim's remarks were in a personal letter to Mr Blouke Carus, and are quoted with permission.

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Keith Douglas 1920-1944

A Biography

Desmond Graham

Keith Douglas, who was killed in Normandy three days after D-day, was perhaps the finest poet of the war generation. From this first critical biography he emerges as a greatly talented, cross-grained young man who flung himself into a war he knew he would not survive. Illustrated £5·50

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I: Contradictions Among the People 1956-1957

Roderick MacFarquhar

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